Minutes

Board of Commissioners
Budget Workshop
May 24, 2011
8:30 a.m.

Notice: A complete audio recording of this meeting can be heard by accessing Fayette County's Website at www.fayettecountyga.gov. Click on "Board of Commissioners", then "County Commission Meetings", and follow the instructions. The entire meeting or a single topic can be heard.

The Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, met in a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, May 24, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room, Suite 100 of the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Commissioners Present:	Herb Frady, Chairman Robert Horgan, Vice Chairman Steve Brown Lee Hearn Allen McCarty
Staff Present:	Jack Krakeel, County Administrator Carol Chandler, Executive Assistant Karen Morley, Chief Deputy Clerk Chief Financial Officer Mary Holland Assistant Finance Director Toni Jo Howard Budget Officer Sergio Acevedo

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Chairman Frady called the Budget Workshop meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety Director Allen McCullough and Chief Tom Bartlett were present to discuss the budget. Public Safety Director Allen McCullough presented a history of the fire fund and fire services. He said during the budget last year his staff had projected the fact that there would probably be a shortfall in fire tax revenue particularly on the residential side. He said this had occurred and noted that there was a little over $800,000 deficit in order to just meet operating expenses and begin July 1st. Chief Tom Bartlett presented a power point presentation to the Board outlining the millage rate for fire tax, insurance premium tax and the impact fee program that was started in 2001. A copy of the presentation, identified as "Attachment No. 1", follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof. Chief Bartlett further discussed the breathing apparatuses that need replacement and are also out of compliance. He also discussed the fact that the portable radios need to be replaced because of radio failures and parts no longer being available. He also said staff was asking for the Board's consideration for a policy change involving funding of fire hydrants. He noted that Fayette County was the only area in metro Atlanta that does this. He said most fire hydrants were funded through the Water System.

Public Safety Director Allen McCullough said his department was in a situation now as a result of the economy and he did not want to under emphasize the need for this department's requests. He said he did not want to come back to the Board in a few years with an emergency situation. He also discussed the pressing need for an emergency command center. He said staff would be applying for a grant in the near future and would ask for the Board's help with match money of 75/25 for the center. He also discussed the fire stations and the staff necessary to operate those stations as well as manning the fire trucks.

After some discussion, County Administrator Jack Krakeel remarked if the mil rate was set at 2.5 it would provide the operating budget and it would give 1/10 of a mil additional to go toward capital needs. He noted that this would strictly affect the unincorporated areas and not Fayetteville or Peachtree City.

Chairman Frady said there was a consensus of the Board to set the mil rate at 2.5.

Chief Finance Officer Mary Holland said staff was recommending a reduction in the EMS fund and there was a consensus that the Board agreed with this reduction.

County Administrator Jack Krakeel called for a short break at 9:50 a.m. before the Board proceeds to the Probate Court budget.

At 10:05 a.m. Mr. Krakeel remarked that Judge Jackson was present to discuss her budget.

PROBATE COURT

Probate Judge Ann Jackson and Chief Clerk Michelle Skiff were present to discuss this budget. Judge Jackson said her primary reason for coming before the Board was her request for additional staff. She noted at this time she had three full time and one part time clerk and she needed five full time clerks. She remarked that there would be changes coming in July of 2012 when the jurisdiction of the court changes making the Fayette County Probate Court an Article VI Court. She said the population of Fayette County was certified at over 96,000 and this resulted in the change. She said their caseloads include marriage licenses, fire arms licenses, birth and death certificates and passports. She pointed out that there had been 805 passport applications just this year alone. She said she was also asking consideration for scanners in order to get all of the old books scanned into the record to allow for easy access by staff and citizens. She asked for consideration to allow the part time clerk to go to full time and to hire a full time additional person bringing her total staff number to five full time clerks. She also pointed out that the law required certain clerks to handle certain functions. She asked the Board for consideration for her budget request.

CLERK OF COURTS

Clerk of Courts Sheila Studdard was present to discuss this budget. She said the main reason for her request today was a request for a staff position. She said it related to the Board of Equalization and felt it would be seasonable. She asked for consideration to add 10 hours to the employee portion. She said she did not want to hire anyone new, but needed some additional hours to add to an existing part time employee or to spread the hours out over several people.

County Administrator Jack Krakeel said there would be a decline of these kinds of cases in the long term. He pointed out that Ms. Studdard should have a fairly good idea by June 16th of the impact of the number of appeals that might go to the Board of Equalization. He suggested the Board defer a decision on this request until June 16th until Ms. Studdard has this information.

Chairman Frady asked if benefits would be included in this staff request and Ms. Studdard replied there would be no benefits involved with this request. .

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Director of Information Systems Russell Prince was present to discuss this budget. County Administrator Jack Krakeel remarked that several weeks ago the Board had approved the Strategic Technology Plan. He noted that included in that assessment was a projection of developing a truly e-government environment in which the citizens of the county would be able to conduct the vast majority of business with the County electronically. He noted that the auditing rules for local governments has changed substantially over the course of the last three to five years. He remarked that this Plan provides a roadmap over the course of the next five years to bring the County up to speed with technology needs for an organization of this size. He stated the internal fiber cabling has been upgraded over the last four years and there has also been significant amount of work done to bring the County up to standard. He said the Strategic Technology Plan was designed to give the County a guided process for adding additional and upgrading additional infrastructure over the course of the next five years and doing so in a measured approach to achieve the goals and objectives that have been established for our local government both in terms of managing risk, updating infrastructure and ensuring that the County can begin to transition completely to an e-government environment.

Chief Finance Officer Mary Holland remarked that this Plan is still ongoing and the final numbers were not complete when the five year CIP was developed. She pointed out that in the five year CIP plan staff had recommended a funding over five years of $916,500. She noted that Mr. Prince's final schedule indicated the one time cost for the capital is $1,216,000. She said she would not recommend changing these numbers at this time and felt the numbers would be tweaked as the County goes through this process. She pointed out that Mr. Prince had also included annual costs that were associated with these initiatives.

Director of Information Systems Russell Prince remarked that one of the primary findings of the consultants was the fact that the County was not current on the refresh cycle of desktops, printers, and scanners. He said he had performed a manual inventory of all of the equipment in the County as well as an inventory of the Cisco networking equipment. He said staff was trying to keep within the budget amount of $350,000 that had been recommended by the consultants. He asked for consideration to have a trained and dedicated GIS technician on staff to handle the huge use of GIS data on a day to day basis. He pointed out that this individual would cross train other personnel in the County.

Mr. Prince also remarked on the Microsoft licenses as well as desktops needed to be upgraded and commented that those licenses would be covered for two years until the end of 2013. He suggested moving the Enterprise Agreement into this year if there were funds available which would allow the County to get on board and benefit from the higher discounts for licensing and so forth. He said there were approximately 525 desktops and 60% of those were at least five to six years old and a lot of those were seven and eight years old.

Assistant Finance Director Toni Jo Howard interjected that the memory capability in the older PC's cannot handle the processing speed of new software programs.

Commissioner Hearn asked how much money had been set aside in the current budget for this program. Ms. Holland replied that basically it was the $916,500 of which $586,500 has been slated for 2012 in the CIP. Mr. Krakeel interjected that the budget for the GIS technician position has not been included in the general fund operating budget.

Commissioner Brown remarked that serious attention had to be given to GIS and Mr. Prince interjected concern regarding possible lawsuits that the County might face in the future.

County Administrator Jack Krakeel remarked that the GIS committee continues to this date to help establish the standards for the County. He said currently the County did not have a coordinated centralized process for GIS technology. He said what had driven this issue to the forefront was the Sheriff's acquisition of the Spillman Management Software Program. He said there would be a need to ensure that the County maintains the CAD system in accordance with the standards prescribed by the vendor and that was heavily dependent upon GIS data. He said from his perspective he felt the time had come for this County to take a serious look at GIS not only in the support of the public safety functions but also as it would apply to Stormwater Management, Water System, Flood Plain Mapping, Planning and Zoning and so forth. He remarked that as long time employees who have institutional knowledge of the County retire, that knowledge would disappear and the County has to be able to transfer that institutional knowledge into GIS applications. He noted that the request for the GIS technician was $86,500 including salary and benefits.

Mr. Prince interjected that the salary for the GIS technician was based on information from the consultant, and Ms. Holland said this position would require a very unique expertise and somebody with a few years experience. Mr. Krakeel said staff would verify this information through UGA and would provide a job classification for the position.

RECAP OF PROPOSED FY2012 BUDGET

County Administrator Jack Krakeel remarked that there were some unresolved issues that the Board would need to discuss. He said these issues include the request from the Probate Court specifically regarding the positions; the Clerk of Courts request could be handled at the Board's June 23rd meeting at which time there would be more definitive information; the issue of the supplement for the Senior Judge's secretary; decision on the mil rate; CIP projects list; cleaning of the Health Department; and the GIS technician position.

After a brief discussion on some of these unresolved issues, County Administrator Jack Krakeel thanked staff for all of their hard work on this budget. He noted that the public hearings on the FY2012 budget would be held on June 9th and June 23rd at the regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners' meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Frady adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m.

Karen Morley, Chief Deputy Clerk

Herbert E. Frady, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 23rd day of June, 2011.

Karen Morley, Chief Deputy Clerk