



PAULDING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

AUGUST 8, 2023 / 9:00 AM

Watson Government Complex
Second Floor – Board of Commissioners Meeting Room

CALL TO ORDER: David L. Carmichael, Chairman

PRESENT: David L. Carmichael, Chairman; Keith Dunn, Post 1; Sandy Kaecher, Post II; Virginia Galloway, Post III; Brian Stover, Post IV; Jayson Phillips, County Attorney; Frank Baker, County Manager; Rebecca Merideth, County Clerk.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Public Hearing on the proposed Tax Increase.

Chairman Carmichael opened the Public Hearing and asked Tabitha Pollard, Finance Director to speak.

Tabitha Pollard, Finance Director stated she had handouts in the back of the room for everyone and presented a presentation and expressed there were quite a few challenges. This Public Hearing is the last of three. In the presentation Ms. Pollard explained the process of how to establish the tax rate. The 2000 Tax Payer Bill of Rights, the increase of inflation and how that has impacted the County M & O. She further explained that each property owner had received a property assessment. This is not the property tax you owe but an assessment of the property. The tax amount will be 40% of your assessed value minus deductions, multiplied by the millage rate and that will be the amount of your taxes. She further stated the 17.91% was not an increase on top of what your assessment is. The presentation showed the millage rates for the surrounding Counties, the 16-year millage rate history, a breakdown of the percentage of taxes and where they go, as well as a breakdown of where the expenditures go. Ms. Pollard explained that three things are fueling the increase; inflation, labor market, and population growth. Homestead Exemption was explained along with the one-time State Homestead Tax Relief Grant approved by Governor Kemp. She explained where citizens could find more resources and information regarding their taxes.

Chairman Carmichael asked County Attorney Jayson Phillips to explain the purpose of the Public Hearing.

Jayson Phillips, County Attorney stated the purpose of the Public Hearing was due to a requirement of State Law. The hearing gives the public an opportunity to speak on a topic. This is not a question and answer session. It is a time for Commissioners to hear from the public and consider their views and opinions.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Citizens wishing to speak were directed to sign in at the podium:

Mr. Tom Loyd stated he lives in Cobb County and owns four (4) rental properties in Paulding County. He believes the millage rates should not be increased because the County and the School Board are already receiving raises through the increased values of homes.

Ms. Nikki Lumpkin stated she has lived in Paulding County her entire life. She stated the Government should make cuts in the budget in order to meet expenses, instead of increasing taxes.

Mr. Fred Jones listed several positive reasons for living in Paulding County. He also stated home values have started trending downward. He believes a millage rate increase would be a bad idea and would keep people from moving to the County. He further stated if the County is attractive to buyers, they will continue to move to Paulding County, making tax revenues will increase.

Mr. Mike Torrone stated he has lived in Paulding County for nine (9) years and is a Lender. He has seen higher millage rates make it more difficult for people to purchase a home. He further stated people are moving further away to find less expensive houses and a lower cost of living.

Ms. Brenda Bell stated she has lived in Paulding County for 31 years. She said her husband has recently retired and they are living on a fixed income. She wants to continue living in Paulding County, but may not be able to with taxes and the cost of living increasing. She stated the County should bring in more business to help pay the taxes.

With no other citizens wishing to speak, Chairman Carmichael closed the Public Hearing.

Chairman Carmichael stated the Budget is the most important issue for each Commissioner.

Commissioner Galloway reminded the citizens of the importance of buying in Paulding County. She stated the revenue generated from sales tax helps to offset the property tax.

CONCLUSION OF REGULAR BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT: Sandy Kaecher made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Chairman Carmichael. Voting Yea: Chairman Carmichael, Post I Keith Dunn, Post II Sandy Kaecher, Post III Virginia Galloway, Post IV Brian Stover.


Rebecca Merideth, County Clerk


David L. Carmichael, Chairman