

July 28, 2015
Statesboro, GA

Special Called Meeting

The Board of Commissioners met at 12:00 pm in the Community Room of the North Main Annex. Chairman Nevil welcomed guests and called the meeting to order. Commissioner Thompson gave the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Olympia Gaines, Clerk of the Board, performed the roll call of the commissioners and staff. The following commissioners were present: Chairman Nevil, Commissioner Mosley, Commissioner Rushing, and Commissioner Thompson. The following staff were present: County Manager Tom Couch, County Attorney Jeff Akins, Assistant County Manager Andy Welch, Chief Financial Officer Whitney Richland, Tax Assessor John Scott, Management Analyst Cindy Steinmann, and Chief Deputy Jared Akins. Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Simmons, and Commissioner Ethridge were absent.

The only item on the agenda was the advertised Public Hearing for the proposed property tax increase for FY2016. Chairman Nevil opened the Public Hearing and called for comments from the audience. Mr. Charles Chandler asked the Board to review all the options as the proposed tax increase would be a challenge for the elderly and those who are on a fixed income. Mrs. Nan Rushing expressed how difficult it is for widows and those on fixed incomes to choose between paying for medical care, other bills and taxes. She asked why there weren't allowances made for those on fixed incomes or those individuals who were among the elderly. She asked the Board to take into consideration the widows and those on fixed incomes who cannot afford to pay increased property taxes.

Mr. William Emley asked the Board to consider the elderly and those on fixed incomes, and he also asked the Board to review areas where the County may be losing revenue and could possibly cut back on certain services. Mr. Joe Bell asked the Board to consider impact fees as an alternate source to generate revenue. Mr. Couch explained that impact fees are primarily used to finance infrastructure, roads, parks, etc. Mr. Couch explained the reasons for the proposed tax increase to include: (1) effects of the recession and a weakened financial condition; (2) state mandates and legislation that erode revenues through special interest tax exemptions; and (3) population growth and increasing service demands.

Chairman Nevil closed the Public Hearing and thanked the audience for their comments and input into reviewing other alternatives to the proposed property tax increase. He called for general comments from the commissioners and staff. The commissioners thanked everyone for their attendance, all the hard work put into the budget process, and thanked the citizens for their input and comments.

Hearing no further comments from the commissioners or staff, Chairman Nevil asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Rushing offered a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mosley seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously with Commissioner Thompson, Commissioner Rushing, and Commissioner Mosley voting in favor of the motion.

J. Garrett Nevil, Chairman

Attest: _____

Olympia Gaines, Clerk of the Board