



**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP/MEETING
JUNE 15, 2011, 3:00 P.M.**

Minutes

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Chairman Leroy Blackshear, Councilman Henry Etheridge, Councilman Theodus L. Drayton, and Councilman L. Martin Sauls IV.

OFFICIALS ABSENT: Vice Chairman Samuel Gregory

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator, Andrew Fulghum; Director of Administrative Services Division, Ronnie Malphrus; Auditor, Hazel Holmes; Assessor Susan Waite; and Lisa Lamb.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act the electronic and print media were notified.

During periods of discussion and/or presentations minutes are typically condensed and paraphrased.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Blackshear called the Budget Workshop Meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

INVOCATION: Invocation was given by Councilman Drayton

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Blackshear led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: There were no amendments to the Agenda. Chairman Blackshear approved the Agenda as published.

HAZEL HOLMES – AUDITOR’S OFFICE: Ms. Holmes addressed the Council. She said she did not know why she was placed on the Agenda; she had not requested it but would be glad to answer any questions the Council Members may have. Councilman Sauls said he thinks this Agenda item is in reference to a meeting that was held several weeks ago regarding network, computers, server and etc. Ms. Holmes said her Department is up and running but she still would like a separate network server for her Department. She said they are almost completely caught up entering tax data and hopes to have the \$25.00 vehicle tax fee in place for July tax bills. She told the Council every time there is a fee in lieu of taxes it is important that she is included with the group that decides how the fee is calculated because in the end it ends up on her desk and everybody needs to be on the same page.

BUDGET DISCUSSION: Mr. Ronnie Malphrus addressed the Council. He said the approved changes from the last meeting have been made to the proposed Budget.

He said the County operating budget is \$21,486,884.00 and the millage is at 145 mills, which is a 4 mill increase. He said he increased the school millage by 4.25, which is what they requested. The County debt is at 12 mills, which the Financial Advisor proposed; so that is an increase of 9 mills. School debt is at 22.5 mills. He explained that he had asked the School District how much debt service they needed but they haven't given him an exact answer yet. Ms. MackHuff from the School District was present. She said they needed 25 mills for the school debt. Mr. Malphrus explained the budget contains a 23.25 mill increase altogether. He offered to answer any questions.

Councilman Sauls said he thought the County debt increase was 3 mills. Mr. Malphrus explained that when he ran the calculations the total millage came to 142 instead of 141, which is where the extra mill came from. There was some discussion about \$1,500,000.00 that was used to pay down on the lease equipment debt.

Mr. Malphrus said there has been some discussion about changing the school collection rate to 95% instead of 92%, which would give the school an additional \$346,000.00 for their budget. He said the school understands that if the additional money is not collected they will have to adjust their budget to cover the shortage. Chairman Blackshear asked if that will affect taxes. Mr. Malphrus said no because the millage will be the same. Councilman Etheridge asked if the school understands Council is only increasing the fee so they will only receive what is collected. Mr. Malphrus said yes. Councilman Drayton asked if it matters if the collection rate is increased since they will only get what is collected. Mr. Malphrus explained that it would give the school \$346,000 additional money to work with in their budget. Mr. Fulghum asked the Council if they care if the collection rate of 95% is added into the budget or not. Chairman Blackshear said he did not have a problem with it as long as the School Board understands they will only get the amount that is collected. Councilman Sauls, Councilman Drayton and Councilman Etheridge all agreed with Chairman Blackshear.

Councilman Etheridge asked why money was budgeted in the Development Services Department if there was not going to be anybody in that Department. Mr. Malphrus said he left money in that Department for phones, maintenance contract for copier and Consultant fees. Councilman Etheridge asked about maintenance contracts in the EMS budget and why there is such a difference in what was budgeted and what was spent. Mr. Malphrus said there was some discussion with Brian when he was here about being able to reduce some of those fees. He said the maintenance contract fees in Department 56 and 49 cover all of IT. Councilman Etheridge asked about money spent from Firetower Fire Station's budget. Mr. Malphrus said he would have to check on that. He thinks it is probably money spent for equipment needed and was just taken out of that line item since the Fire Station has not been built yet. Councilman Etheridge asked about line item 1522 Interest Revenue, which is a lot lower than projected and Miscellaneous Revenue, which has a lot of money in it. Mr. Malphrus explained that the Interest Revenue has not been updated since January. He said the Internal Auditors will update that line item and the amount comes from the Treasurer's Office. He said the Treasurer posts revenue that she is not exactly sure about where to post it in the Miscellaneous line item and the Auditor's monitor that line item and make necessary adjustments throughout the year. Councilman Etheridge asked about money budgeted for LCOG in the Solid Waste Department. Mr. Malphrus said that money is for the Solid Waste Plan Update, which the County is required to update periodically and in the past LCOG has done the work. Councilman Etheridge asked about the salary adjustment for the Victim's Witness Department. Mr. Malphrus said the State no longer allows Victim's Witness money to pay for clerical positions so he moved that position back to the Sheriff's Department.

Councilman Drayton asked about the Levy Fire Contract, they asked for \$280,000.00 and \$230,000.00 is budgeted. Mr. Malphrus said yes, that was adjusted at the direction of the Council. Councilman Drayton asked about \$14,000.00 requested for a medical physician and if that is for a doctor. Mr. Malphrus said \$12,000.00 was put in the budget in Department 46 and yes it is for a doctor. Mr. Malphrus explained that the County is required to have a physician review all policies and procedures for EMS as well as write reports for any procedures or medications administered on an ambulance. The County contracts with a local physician for \$12,000.00 a year.

Councilman Sauls asked what SC MIAP Assessment is (page 35 of 40) for \$59,000.00. Mr. Malphrus said it is a state program for people who qualify for indigent care when they have received inpatient hospital services. He said each County is required to participate in that program and they determine the amount that has to be paid by the County. Councilman Drayton asked if citizens know about this program. Mr. Malphrus said yes, the hospitals refer people to the County all the time.

Mr. Fulghum said there had been some discussion about the Treasurer's Office regarding a request for \$7,500.00 for part time help. He does not know if there was any resolution on that request but he wanted the Council to know it is not included in the proposed budget. Mr. Malphrus said there was an additional request by the Treasurer's Office for \$7,500.00 in order to open a satellite office in Hardeeville, which has also not been included in the proposed budget. There was some discussion regarding if the County has funds for that request. Councilman Drayton said he would like the Treasurer's Office to try out the satellite office first and make sure it is feasible before granting that request. Councilman Sauls and Councilman Etheridge agreed. Mr. Fulghum said they will not add it to the budget until directed by Council.

There was some discussion about the computer issues and if they were fixed. Mr. Malphrus said the County has contracted with BS3 to help with IT issues until the IT position is filled. He said almost all of the issues have been taken care of. The Magistrate's Office is still down because lightening struck the tower that feeds their network connections and that issue is being addressed.

Mr. Malphrus informed the Council that Ms. Holmes request for a separate network server is not in the proposed budget. Chairman Blackshear said he understood that and staff should work that out based on if the request is feasible or not.

ADJOURN: Councilman Sauls motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Drayton. The motion carried with the Council Members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Approved By:
