The Tift County Board of Commissioners along with the Cities of Tifton, Omega and Ty Ty Mayors, Councilperso
ns and staff met jointly on Wednesday, January 5, 2011. The meeting was held at the conference room of the Baldwin Pool Recreation Facility at 5:45 PM.

The group reviewed a slightly revised list of items proposed for funding if the SPLOST V referendum passes in March. The list included the removal of a $4.5 million allocation for Improvements to City Hall and changed the allotment to be used to help pay off the City of Tifton’s telecommunication debt. It included the addition of a $300,000 allocation for the Tift County Extension Service Center and the understanding that $100,000 of the eight million allocation to the Tift County Development Authority be used at the Henry Tift Meyers Airport.

This meeting is the last meeting before each governmental entity meets again to approve the referendum wording and sign Interlocal Agreements.

City Manager Mike Vollmer told the group that earlier meetings resulted in the change of the allocation for the City of Tifton in the amount of $4.5 million changed from repairs and renovation of the Tifton City Hall to retirement of previously incurred debt on telecommunications. According to McCall & Associates, the City Hall is in very poor condition and would most likely have to be closed soon. The city of Tifton is considering three options concerning the City Hall which is to stabilize the current building, tear it down and build another one on the same site or re-build at another location. They felt they were not prepared to make a recommendation on the City Hall at this time and it was better to include a more worthy project for the City of Tifton and this was to take care of the telecommunication debt.

Mayor Cater joined other in commending the city and county staff for gathering information so quickly in time to place SPLOST V on the ballot for March 2011 at the same time as the Board of Education’s SPLOST.

It was suggested then that each representative official be given the opportunity to comment. The majority of elected officials present were favorable although several had questions and concerns.

Commissioner Miley stated that she was disappointed in the amount allocated for roads and bridges which is $13 million; she would like it to be $18 million. She also had concerns about the $8 million allocated to the Tift County Development Authority and without a business plan and some accountability she could not support it.

Councilman Dickie Robinson of Omega commended Commissioner Miley for her comments and stated that when this passes, speaking in faith, He believes the money ought to be used for what we say we are going to use it for.

Commissioner Hester supports the SPLOST V 110 percent, without it we wouldn’t have anything. He is glad we made this commitment and came together as one.

Commissioner Setters agrees with Commissioner Miley stating there are numbers we all would like to see tweaked in different ways however he thinks this is the most fiscally responsible SPLOST so far and it has his support.

Tift County citizen, Nelson Bailey stated he believed the item to fund the Development Authority was “pie in the sky” and noted that it was the third largest expense on the referendum. Darrel Osborne, a member of the Tiftarea Tea party
noted that the line item proposed to retire the City of Tifton’s telecommunications
debt was a wise move. Dr. Joe Turner, agreeing with Commissioner Miley by
stating she has a very valid point and asked if the Development Authority had a
specific plan. This issue was addressed by Brian Marlow, President and CEO of the
Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of the
Development Authority. He stated that the Development Authority has numerous
buildings in the Industrial Parks here but that most are not marketable in their
current condition. They have plans to extend water and sewer lines to some
locations and the cost to build a planned spec building is $5 million. We plan to put
$1 million in a contingency fund for site improvements. He stated that he would
gladly report the Development Authority’s spending to both the Tifton City Council
and the Board of Commissioners on a monthly basis if they so choose.

The proposal also includes $2 million for the Downtown Development Authority.

The final distribution allocation list of this proposed SPLOST V was given to all
present totaling collections up to 60.7 million dollars.

There were no further comments and the officials agreed to meet at 6 PM on
January 10, 2011 for the final adoption of the Interlocal Agreements and the
County will then adopt the Resolution calling for the election. This meeting will be
held at the Tift County Multi-Purpose Building in the Gym located on Victory
Drive.

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Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7

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Vice Chairman, Fred W. Rigdon District 5

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Commissioner Donnie Hester, District 1

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Commissioner Melissa Chevers, District 2

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Commissioner Robert Setters, District 3

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Commissioner Sherry Miley, Dist. 4

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absent

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Commissioner C. Michael Jones, District 6

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Attest: _____________________________

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Commissioner C. Michael Jones, District 6

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Glynda Hemby, County Clerk