The scheduled Regular Session of the Tift County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman on Monday, July 11, 2011, at 6:00 P.M. in the Commissioner’s Meeting Room of the Administrative Building. Member of the commission present including Chairman Thompson were Vice Chairman Setters, Commissioners Buck Rigdon, Donnie Hester, Melissa Chevers, Sherry Miley and Mike Jones.

Chairman Thompson asked Commissioner Hester to give the invocation followed by the pledge to the flag.

Minutes: Motion approving the minutes of May 25, 2011 Budget Workshop Session; June 6, 2011 Workshop Session; June 13, 2011 Regular Session; June 20, 2011 Called Meeting & Public Hearing and June 27, 2011 Called Meeting to Adopt Budget was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING:

A. Public Hearing for Proposed Property Tax Increase: The Chairman opened the scheduled Public Hearing and turned the opening statements over to the County Manager. He discussed from a power point presentation on the FY 2011 Funding Formula. The handout for the funding formula has three buckets which represents the three funding sources; there are 25 Countywide services and we had 6 Joint Services that the county operated with the City of Tifton. Each service contract states what each entity would pay.

The taxes were 10.39 mils County line to County line with an additional 2.103 mils for the Special Tax District in the unincorporated areas which funded the joint services. The City portion of these funds came from city taxes. The County received a letter from the City of Tifton back in February stating that they wanted to dissolve the joint services except for fire leaving the County a revenue deficit of some $900,000. If you live in the unincorporated areas of the county your tax rate will remain flat. That is not the case for city residents because of the shifting of the tax burden you will have a 1.79 mil increase. Examples were given so that the public could see the dollar amount of tax increase based on a $100,000 home taxable at 40%.

CITIZENS OF CITY OF TIFTON: County Taxes would be $487.32
   City Taxes would be 270.36
   Total Taxes $757.68 (Increase of $71.72)

COUNTY RESIDENTS
   County Taxes would be $487.32
   Fire District 12.40
   Total Taxes $499.72 (No Increase)

The County millage rate has remained flat since 2004 until this year.

Public Comments:

Marty Goff asked: Who do we blame – City or County. The County Manager gave the answer that the only thing we can control is the County millage rate. We have no jurisdiction over what the City of Tifton does.

Pete Garvey asked: He referred to the Interlocal Agreements for these services asking if the city and the county entered into these agreements to provide these services, signed, sealed and delivered. The County Manager answered yes. There is a legal out of these contracts with a 60 day notice and the city gave that notification. It does not automatically shift the burden to the county however; the county would have to decline services tremendously.

Wendell Westbrook was concerned about the amount of property owned by the Development Authority that was not on the tax digest. Response by staff was that it is not only the Development Authority; it is the Hospital, Churches, and Non-Profit Organizations.
Mr. Braswell from the Ty Ty area address the tax increase stating that his house taxes have constantly gone up every year, not from a millage increase but because of the assessment being increased almost yearly with no improvements to his home.

Others that made comments in the public hearing were Mike Hickman, Donde Keagle asked what all was covered in Development Support Services. Barbara Paukl spoke stating the public was lead to believe if SPLOST passed, property taxes would not increase.

There were no further comments and the Chairman closed the Public Hearing.

Public Comments:

Ronald Nixon 2700 South Park Avenue addressed the Board referencing the upcoming re-districting and asked if anyone from the County Commissioners has attending any meetings at this point. The County Manager addressed the issue stating that we have made some contracts already as it relates to the Commission Districts. We will be addressing this issue in the August Meeting with the RDC as it relates to the Commission Districts. The State re-districting as it relates to State positions will be done through the State of Georgia. Some of our local Districts fallout in the 5% plus or minus so we are preparing to move forward on this issue. Mr. Nixon stated that he needs to get with Commissioner Hester and the County Manager to get some things moving on some issues of his concern that he has been very quiet about for some time now.

Brain Marlow addressed the Board to give updates on the Chamber and the Development Authority. He advised that Tifton and Tift County was featured in the July Georgia Trend Magazine with a very good article about what we are doing here in Tifton as far as Economic Development. He advised of a new feature at the Chamber which is the E-Newsletter and asked that if anyone has anything they would like included in the monthly letter please get it to someone at the Chamber. Last year Georgia Power granted $10,000 to do a community Assessment and we are getting ready to get started on this project. The Janis Group will be doing the assessment and they will be contacting you and he would like for the Commissioners to take the time to give them some fee back on what we are doing wrong and/or right so that we can develop a plan of action to help the community to prosper. Next he advised that they have teamed up with AT&T to acquire T-Mobile. They are going through the FCC hoops for the merger. Once the merger is complete with the exception of one small area near Albany, you will be able to pick up service over the entire state. This is a big plus for us.

The next thing is that we are currently working with two national clothing retailers right now. One is looking at the old Winn Dixie Store and the other is looking at possibly the mall area. The Old Whirlwind Building has been sold to Cooksey Steel, a local company and will go back on the tax digest at full value. The Tifton Extrusions Facility has been purchased by a Spanish Company who has four (4) worldwide locations and is now Tifton Aluminum Extrusions and has already created 55 jobs and will go back on the tax digest next year at full value.

Mr. Marlow reported that the activity level is tremendous right now and appreciates the support that the Board gives them. We are going to continue to create jobs whenever we can here in Tifton, Georgia. If any Board member or citizen would like to talk with him about anything they are doing, his door is always open. Commissioner Chevers thank him for all the effort he is doing to keep us prospering and moving forward.

CONSENT AGENDA:

B. Motion awarding the Contract for paving of 5,600 sq yards of West Golden Road to Scruggs Company in the low bid amount of $54,642.35

C. Motion awarding the contract for the Curb-Gutter and Sidewalk Project on martin Luther King Drive to Sumner Construction in the low bid amount of $67,816.80

D. Motion to renew the Motorola Service Agreement for radios, 911 Phone System and N.I.C.E Recording System in the amount of $84,558.48

E. Motion ratifying the Jail Construction Fund Budget Amendment in the amount of $100,000 as discussed on June 27, 2011
G. Motion adopting an Ordinance allowing Tift County to be entitled to collect its share of the 911 prepaid wireless phone fees

H. Motion approving the renewal of the South Georgia Community Service Board for FY 2012

I. Motion approving and authorizing the Chairman to endorse the renewal of all State Property Leases

J. Motion approving and authorizing the Chairman to endorse the Memorandum of Understanding between Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Tift County as a designated County as a Hurricane Evacuation Site.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of Items B, C, D, E, G, H, I and J was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA:

F. Development Authority Board Appointments: Motion was made by Commissioner Miley to appoint Monty Veazy to the Development Authority Board, seconded by Commissioner Hester. Motion carried with a 5 to 1 vote. Commissioner Rigdon voted against the motion.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jones to submit the name of Jay Short to be appointed to the Development Authority, seconded by Commissioner Rigdon. Motion carried with a 4 to 2 vote. Commissioner Hester and Chevers voted against the motion.

After these motions were made, seconded and voted upon, Commissioner Hester addressed the Board stating that he did not feel that the voting was done correctly. There were several other people to be considered for these two positions and it was his understanding that all Commissioners were suppose to have the opportunity to make a nomination and once that was complete the nominations were then to be voted on. The County Attorney addressed the issue and stated that as far as the vote that just took place, in his opinion it was legal however we did lack a little clarity in the fact that the Clerk was not given the time to announce the two positions and all of the people that had turned in Board Applications that showed interest in serving this Board. He asked the Chairman if he would ask for a five minute recess, he and the Clerk would go pull the records and he could then give a better understanding of what should take place with the voting.

Chairman Thompson stated that the Board of Commissioners meeting is in recess for five minutes for the County Clerk and County Attorney to research the records.

Chairman Thompson now declares the Board of Commissioners out of recess and back in Regular Session.

The County Attorney advised the Board that documentation has been located from April 2009 stating in the manner of which the Board of Commissioners agreed to which states that the Chairman will open the floor for nominations and nominations will be received from any Board Member. Once all nominations are received the Chairman will close the nominations. The Chairman then will call for the votes on each person nominated after a motion and second of a particular nominee. Failure to receive a second for a motion that nominee would fall from the selection. The process will continue until a motion and second with four affirmative votes has been received by a verbal or show of hand vote.

Therefore, at this time the County Attorney said that the previous action taken by the Board on this issue should be rescinded and this procedure should be followed.

Motion to rescind all previous action on this issue was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried with four affirmative votes.

The County Clerk advised that the position of Harold Harper has expired on Development Authority. Previously Mr. Harper had requested to be considered for re-appointment but prior to this meeting he called the County Clerk and asked that his name be removed for consideration. The Board Applications for this position for consideration are Monty Veazy, Greg Crumbly and Jay Short.
The Chairman opened the floor for nominations to fill the seat presently held by Harold Harper:

Commissioner Miley nominated Monty Veazy and Commissioner Rigdon nominated Jay Short. With no further nominations the Chairman closed the nominations.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rigdon to appoint Jay Short to this position on the Development Authority, seconded by Commissioner Jones. Motion carried with a 4 to 2 vote. Commissioners Hester and Miley voted against the motion. Jay Short has been appointed to this position.

The County Clerk advised that the second position available on the Development Authority is the seat of Dr. Homer Day. Those to be considered for this seat are Dr. Day, Monty Veazy and Greg Crumbly.

The Chairman opened the floor for nominations to fill the seat presently held by Dr. Homer Day.

Commissioner Hester nominated Dr. Homer Day and commissioner Miley nominated Monty Veazy. With no further nominations the Chairman closed the nominations.

Motion was made by Commissioner Miley to appoint Monty Veazy to this position on the Development Authority, seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion results in a tie vote 3 to 3 with the votes being Commissioners Setters, Jones and Miley for the motion and Commissioners Chevers, Hester and Rigdon against the motion.

We then move to the next nomination since four (4) affirmative votes were not received.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chevers to re-appoint Dr. Homer Day to this position on the Development Authority, seconded by Commissioner Hester. Motion carried with a 4 to 2. Commissioners Jones and Miley voted against the motion. Dr. Homer Day has been re-appointed to this position.

**K. Revisions to the Tift County Alcohol Ordinance:** The County Attorney addresses the revisions and changes that have been made to this Ordinance as it relates to issuing of Alcohol Beverage License. The change addresses gaming machine violations and other misdemeanors that applicants show when the criminal history is run. The Board feels they need some more time to go over the changes. Motion to table for 30 days was made by Commissioner Miley, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried with a 5 to 1 vote. Commissioner Jones voted against.

**County Manager Items:** None

**Commissioners Items:** None

**Executive Session:** None

Motion to adjourn was made by Chevers, seconded by Commissioner Miley. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7  
Vice Chairman Robert Setters, District 3

Commissioner Donnie Hester, District 1  
Commissioner Melissa Chevers, District 2

Commissioner Sherry Miley, Dist. 4  
Commissioner F. W. (Buck) Rigdon, District 5

Commissioner C. Michael Jones, District 6  
Attest: _____________________________  
Glynda Hemby, County Clerk