

**CALLED MEETING FOR BUDGET WORKSHOP  
TIFT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2013 (9 AM TO 5 PM)**

The scheduled Called Meeting of the Tift County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Vice Chairman Sherry Miley on Friday, June 7, 2013, at 9 AM in the Administrative Building Conference Room. Member of the commission present including Vice Chairman Miley were Commissioners Donnie Hester, Robert Setters, Melissa Chevers and Mike Jones. Chairman Thompson was in and out of the meeting. Commissioner Buck Rigdon was out of town at the time of the meeting.

Vice Chairman Miley called to order the Called Business meeting of the Tift County Board of Commissioners at 9 AM.

The County Manager and the Finance Director began the budget discussion stating there is an overall reduction of 5.23% in this year's budget and does include a 3% COLA raise for all employees which include Jim Carter, County Manager and Glynda Hemby, County Clerk.

Mr. Carter advised that there is a new allocation in the budget for the Airport in the amount of \$50,000. There has been no growth in the Digest; it has continued to stay flat. Health Insurance increased by 11%. He also stated that Commissioner Rigdon has asked if the Board would consider funding some money to Hometown Holidays; the requested amount is \$10,000. He stated that we already put \$49,000 in the Main Street Program and it was decided that was sufficient funding.

The discussion turned to salary increases and Commissioner Jones talked about reading several articles concerning giving bonuses as opposed to COLA's. He stated once you give the COLA that's forever where bonuses are a onetime thing. Mr. Carter stated that he is not opposed to that but from a CPA standpoint as well as attorneys, it has always been best to stay away from bonus for Government Entities. Commissioners feel that bonuses are fair more than a straight across the Board raise and that the bonus helps the less paid employee more. It would be a set amount each year based on years of service. Commissioner Jones stated that we have some folks that have been here 30 years and making a healthy salary which continues to increase yearly with the COLA raise, some where it has got to stop. Going forward we need to work on a cap system. There was much discussion on the salary increase as either a COLA or Bonus. Mike Walker, human Resource Director gave approximate number of employees breaking it down into 10 year or more years of service, 5 to 10 years, 1 to 5 years and 3 months to 1 year and broke down a bonus amount beginning with \$1200 on down to \$250. Much, much discussion continued on this matter however in the end it was decided that it is not practicable to implement this change at this time and was decided to leave in the 3% COLA raise because the budget is balanced. After the adoption of this budget staff will work on this issue and be prepared early on in the next budget process. This will also give staff time to implement a different system, educate the employees and work on a cap system for salary based on the position.

The County Manager then went through each department's budget and pointing out any significant changes, up or down, in each department. There was much discussion about the funds designated in the budget for the Airport. It was explained to the Commissioners that neither the City nor the County have been funding the Airport for some time now and it has been brought to the attention of the staff that the County has got to do something about putting some money toward the Airport or the County will have to take over the running of the Airport entirely. After much discussion of the revenue and expenditures of the Airport the County Manager stated that the County cannot run the airport for \$50,000 a year. Staff will continue to do more research on the Airport and Airport Authority during the year and be prepared with suggestions for the next budget year on the funding for the Airport. The Board agreed to fund the \$50,000 in this budget.

The County Manager advised the Board that the School Board had cut the funding for the Tifton/Tift County Public Library. We have held the line on the County's contribution the same as last year. He wanted the Board to be aware of the cut from the School Board in the event they begin getting calls from the Library.

The County Manager received a call from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission about

funding for flying the County for topo and aerial maps of the County. It has been some years since we received new maps. It will cost approximately \$160,000 and the City has agreed to pay half of the cost. Should the County decided to agree to do this, we have money in contingency that we can take the money from for the cost.

Through the entire meeting the County Manager went through each department's budget individually. In Elections they feel like there will be some reductions because the State is talking about closing some of the polling places because of the early voting procedure that is being implemented and that cuts down on some of the need for polling places.

The Tax Commissioner is new this year and this is his first budget. He worked very hard to make some reductions and to keep the budget in line with reasonable funding to operate his office. The Tax Assessor's budget is down some. The IT budget is up some due to maintenance for Contract Services that we have to pay annually.

Mike Walker, Human Resource Director explained the Retirement Plans and how they work for County employees. What the employee is responsible for in order for the County to make contribution to their retirement.

Building and Grounds budget went up some and most of all the work on the Administrative owned buildings have been completed now. There was a question about maintenance on the Hasty's Building. It was explained that this is historically call the Hasty's Building but it actually houses the Drivers License Services. Superior Court Budget continues to rise because of the number of court cases they are having. The District Attorney Budget is up because they have included a new vehicle. The Finance Director discussed the Pre-Trial Diversion Program through the District Attorney's Office. This Program is funded through a grant however there is no more grant money. The program is supposed to get self-sufficient through money they collect. We need to get control of that account because right now there is no check and balance, the person that operates the program, collects the money, deposits and writes checks from that account.

State Court Budget went down. Judge Mims does a great job at budget cuts and keeping his budget down. Magistrate Court went down by cutting dues and fees; they are just attending things that are absolutely necessary. Probate was probably one of the best years and has not asked for increases. Room 111 has been given to the Probate Judge for a Hearing Room. Juvenile Court is up some do to some State mandated things and Public Safety is up doe to some small equipment purchases we will need.

Motion to go into Executive Session with the right to return to the Budget Work Session for a personnel matter was made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to close Executive Session and return to the Budget Work Session was made by Vice Chairman Miley, seconded by Commissioner Chevers. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioners break for lunch and will return to continue budget discussions.

The Sheriff is also new this year and he has really stepped up to the plate to make budget cuts and hold the line on his operation budget. H has made some changes and has tried to keep his budget to a minimal. We had to add back the supplement. We were under the impression that it would go away when a new Sheriff took office however that was handled through Legislation and it was not passed. This supplement amount is \$6,000 and cannot increase unless the Board votes on it.

EMS has some increases for insurance and workers' compensation premiums however overall the budget is still down. We are in good shape with our ambulance fleet for 3 or 4 years. We outsource the EMS billing and the system is working very well.

Animal Control has been reduced by 1.4%. Public Works is up a little but they are doing a great job out there with as limited funds as possible. No money is in the General Budget for resurfacing and paving. We run all of that through SPLOST Funds. Mosquito Control and Department of Family and Children Services budgets are down.

Recreation is reduced slightly. There is money in SPLOST that has been dedicated to recreation therefore the Athletic Supplies line item has been deleted because that can come from SPLOST funds.

Code Enforcement went down and for the biggest part we were able to cut his legal fees and contract services based on past history. Extension Service is down by less than ½ percent and Community Development is up by 1 ½ %.

Before the meeting closed the salary increases were discussed again at length. The numbers were run according to the employees and their years of service and the money would come out real close to the number that is in the budget for the 3% COLA raise. After still much discussion it was decided that we will work toward a cap on salaries and look further into giving bonuses yearly based on years of services rather than an across the Board COLA raise

Vice Chairman Miley adjourned the Budget Workshop Meeting.

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Chairman Grady Thompson, District 7

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Vice Chairman, Sherry Miley District 4

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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, Dist. 3

\_\_\_\_\_absent\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner F. W. (Buck) Rigdon, District 5

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Commissioner C. Michael Jones, District 6

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Glynda Hemby, County Clerk  
6/07/2013