

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Lee Hearn, Chairman
Edward Gibbons, Vice Chairman
Eric K. Maxwell
Charles W. Oddo
Charles D. Rousseau



FAYETTE COUNTY, GEORGIA

Steve Rapson, County Administrator
Dennis A. Davenport, County Attorney
Tameca P. Smith, County Clerk
Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

140 Stonewall Avenue West
Public Meeting Room
Fayetteville, GA 30214

MINUTES Special Called

May 25, 2023
4:00 p.m.

Welcome to the meeting of your Fayette County Board of Commissioners. Your participation in County government is appreciated. All regularly scheduled Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Chairman Lee Hearn called the May 25, 2023 Board of Commissioners Special Called meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. All members of the Board were present.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Lee Hearn offered the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Acceptance of Agenda

Commissioner Oddo moved to approve the agenda as written. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

BUDGET PRESENTATION:

1. **County Administrator Steve Rapson and Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Weinmann will provide a presentation regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.**

Fayette County Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Weinmann provided the Board a presentation regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.

Economic Outlook

In review of the economic outlook Ms. Weinman stated that data from a survey of public employees showed that they were worried about inflation and their ability to keep up with the current cost of living. She noted that the top reason cited for why people choose public sector employment was job security. She stated that the unemployment rate in Fayette County had increased, which had resulted in a high number of job vacancies. Ms. Weinman highlighted some of the surrounding counties vacancy rates.

Mr. Rapson noted that Fayette County vacancy rate was about 12% total with about 8.5% in the Sheriff's Office. He noted that while this number did fluctuate it was better than neighboring jurisdictions.

Ms. Weinman continued that allowing remote work was one of the most common recommendations to curb employee retention challenges. About 45% of government employees will consider a new job should their agency reduce remote and hybrid work flexibility.

Mr. Rapson stated that staff was in the initiating stages of rolling out the remote/hybrid work schedule for Fayette County employees. Currently, only the Finance Department employees had been fully sanctioned and approved for remote/hybrid work schedules.

Budget Principles

Fayette County followed these principles for several years. Revenues are conservatively budgeted and based on detailed trending and other analysis. The County did not use one-time revenues to fund current expenditures. Current revenues are used to pay current expenditures. There is a budgetary link between the capital budget and operating budget to ensure that ongoing expenses can be funded in the operating budget before putting projects or capital in place.

Planning Guidelines

Fayette County does not use deficit budgeting, which means the County does not use any of the unassigned fund balance to meet the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) budget. There was a continued commitment of delivering outstanding customer service. There was no millage rate change, however no change required advertising as a property tax increase. Since 2013, due to previous rollbacks, the saving to the citizens of Fayette County was over \$65.6 million. The new budget included a full five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of \$6,975,732 and was allocated within the General Fund Balance. Employee benefits have been maintained, increasing the reserve and stabilization, and maintaining the insurance for staff.

Ms. Weinmann stated that a new guideline this year was a focus on recruiting and retention. She stated that incorporated into this year's budget was a workforce pay scale increase of 12.5% for all positions. This pay scale increase was based on increasing the public safety Deputy Sheriff starting salary from \$50K to \$56k. Ms. Weinman stated that the plan was to fund the recruitment and retention initiative through digest growth and no milage rate rollback. She reminded the Board that since the milage rate would not be rolled back and it would have to be advertised as an increase, the anticipated estimated increase would have to be 9.5%. She continued that the pay scale would change by 12.5%, effective July 1, 2023. She advised that there would be no change to the milage rate for 911, Emergency Medical Services, Water Systems and Fire Services, nor would this require a rate increase.

Mr. Rapson stated that during the retreat, the Board directed staff to include the Constitutional and Elected Officers as well as the Griffin Judicial Circuit in the recruitment and retention pay scale increase. He stated that those numbers were reflected in the presentation being presented. He noted that during the first budget hearing, staff would provide these increases broken down, which would allow the Board to vote on the Constitutional and Elected Officers, as well as the Griffin Judicial Circuit increase separately.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked if the increases for public safety would make Fayette County equitable or close to the increased pay rate for public safety in the City of Peachtree City.

Mr. Rapson stated that the City of Peachtree City instituted a 12% increase based on implementing a pay study. The county's proposed recruitment and retention pay scale increase would put us at about 5% less than the officers in the City of Peachtree city, which would mirror Board action from January 2022.

Vice Chairman Gibbons asked if the 12.5% was across the board for all positions regardless of rank.

Mr. Rapson stated that the 12.5% pay increase would be for all Fayette County employees, the entire county pay scale would shift as a result.

Benefit Highlights

The County will continue to offer the same two plans to staff. The Traditional Open Access Point of Service Plan (POS) with the Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) where the County funds \$2,000 for employee and \$4,000 for employee/spouse/ children and also \$4,000 for family. This would go into effect after the \$3,000 deductible was met. The other plan was the High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with Health Savings Account (HSA). Funded with \$1,000 for employees, \$1,250 for employee/spouse/children and \$1,500 for family. Ms. Weinman stated that there had only been one employee premium increase

in the past ten years, in FY2021 to the HSA Plan. The plan maintained the same design, however, employees were asked to pay per paycheck, \$5 more for employee only tier, \$10 more for employee/spouse or child(ren), and \$15 more for family tier. The deductible for the POS plan remained the same. Individual tier –remained at \$5,000 and the family tier remained at \$10,000. For the HDHP the deductibles have increased for the individual tier by \$200 to \$3,000 and will remain the same for family tier at \$5,000. Ms. Weinman stated that there was still a surcharge of \$75 per pay period for those who do not have their preventive care (physicals). There was a \$150 surcharge if a spouse had access to other insurance. Dental coverage remained the same and vision benefit was still \$400 reimbursement to employees.

Ms. Weinmann spoke of the additional benefits including enhanced partnership with Piedmont Hospital and Cigna providing an on-site Health Coach, Erica Roberts (RN) for one-on-one and face-to-face coaching at designated Fayette County locations. The County still had the \$50,000 credit for employee wellness programs and initiatives. Utilization of the digital lifestyle app, Omada, that helped employees get healthier by losing weight and incorporating healthy lifestyle activities. The Cigna 90Now program required employees to get 90-day supply of maintenance medications for a greater cost savings for both the employee and employer. She continued that 98point6 was an online telemedicine option with a \$0 cost until the end of December 2024, in response to the provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. The Omada app had two versions:

- Omada for prevention
 - Offered by Cigna
 - Includes resources for lifestyle changes to reverse high blood pressure and pre-diabetes
- Omada for chronic conditions
 - Offered by Fayette County
 - Includes resources for management of Hypertension and/or Diabetes Mellitus (Type 1, Type 2, and/or Gestational diabetes)

Ms. Weinman stated that the county also offered Alliant Medical Solutions to help guide you through the various parts of Medicare. This free resource was available for employees and their loved ones.

General Fund

The financial projection for FY2023 fund balance was \$32,678,515. Of this, the inventory fund was estimated at \$250K. The Stabilization Fund increased to \$18.7 million based on the proposed M&O budget of expenses, which was three-months of expenses in case of emergencies. The emergencies fund remained the same at \$2M and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) amount was \$6.9 million. This would leave the County with an unassigned budget of \$4.7M. This amount also included 20K being transferred to Victims Assistance due to the low revenue stream in that account.

Budget Summary

Ms. Weinmann stated that the budget for the General Fund leaves a positive impact of \$395,123. She highlighted the \$2.5M for the CIP and \$3.4M for the Water System CIP for 2024.

General Fund Revenues

Property taxes are a largest revenue source for the County General Fund followed by sales tax. The County estimated a total digest increase of 13.0% but only 2.76% of the increase was related to growth. The remaining increase, of 10.04%, was due to re-assessments. Sales taxes are the second largest source of revenue. The local options sales tax revenue was coming in about \$700k over FY2023 estimated budget. She stated that other taxes included occupational tax certificates. TAVT FY2024 budget is \$7.5M. The local options sales tax revenue budget in FY2024 was projected at \$18.5M.

General Fund Expenditures

Public Safety costs remain the largest expenditure in the General Fund at 37%, followed by General Government at 22% and Public Works at 13%. Transfers are at 4.5% which were transfers for the Capital Improvement Program that included \$725k for vehicles and equipment; \$50k for Solid Waste; \$325k for Jail Surcharge (inmate meals), and \$30k Victim's Assistance.

Personnel costs are the largest expense, by type at 64.5%, followed by services of 20.3%. The same transfers are included in the Other Financing Uses and the Debt Services totaling 15.2%.

911 Fund Revenues

Revenues for 911 come from property taxes at 38.2% and the charges for services at 61.8%.

911 Fund Expenditures

Personnel costs are at 67.9% and services are 24.8%. Services include was \$425k for the Carbyne project, 324k for the AT&T/Megalink landline agreement and \$132k for the cell tower leases.

Fire Fund Revenues

Almost ninety-seven percent of this revenue was sourced via property taxes and a small amount for services and miscellaneous revenues totaling 2.3%.

Fire Fund Expenditures

Personnel cost are 83.8%. The transfers are the \$650,000 to Vehicle/Equipment Fund.

EMS Revenues

Revenues are almost even at 48.8% for Service and 51.2% for Property taxes. 50/50. The charges for services are the ambulance transports. The millage rate was 0.5.

EMS Fund Expenditures

The personnel cost was at 73.1% and transfers are \$350,000 to the Vehicle/Equipment Fund.

Water System Fund Revenues

The water sales account for about 80.6% of all revenues for the Water System. Water System Fund also received contributed capital which comes from the various contractors installing waterlines. And the leak protection charge was at 5%.

Water System Expenses

The Water System has several functions. Water System transfers include the \$3.4M CIP as well as administrative cost, water billing, South Fayette and Crosstown Water Plants. Field operations was also a large expense because that was where most of the operations functions took place.

Supplies, specifically chemical costs have increased significantly. Currently the budget was \$900k annually for chemicals. The two largest Water System expenses was personnel costs and the bond debt for this fiscal year.

Proposed Personnel Changes

Ms. Weinmann stated that staff anticipated increasing to 788.235 full-time employees (FTE); 776 full-time and 30 part-time positions (equivalent to 12.235 full-time employees). The anticipated FTE count increase was up 2.12% and will include 14.0 new full-time positions. The new positions include: 10 full-time employees in Fire and Emergency Medical Services, three new School Resources Officers via the Sheriff's Office (cost would be paid by the Fayette County School Board), and 1 full-time employee in Administration as the Assistant County Manager.

There were several position conversions including:

Convert Part-Time to Full-Time

- Elections - Elections Clerk
- Planning and Zoning - Zoning Technician

New Part-Time position - Water System - Professional Engineer

New Intern position - Water System Intern

Solid Waste

- Abolish 1.0 Season Road Worker
- Establish 1.0 Full-Time Transfer Station Maintenance Operator

Internal promotions with no change to FTE count:

Clerk of Superior Court: Senior Deputy Clerk to Real Estate Supervisor

Animal Control: Senior Animal Control Officer to Assistant Animal Control Director
Animal Control Officer to Senior Animal Control Officer

Parks & Recreation: Coordinator to Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

Sheriff's Office: Sergeant to Lieutenant

Solid Waste: Landfill Specialist to Crew Leader I

Water System Personnel Job Reclassifications (Certification Promotions):

- (2) Plant Operator II to (2) Plant Operator I
- (3) Plant Operator III to (3) Plant Operator II
- (1) Plant Maintenance Tech II to (1) Plant Maintenance Tech I
- (2) Plant Maintenance Tech III to (2) Plant Maintenance Tech II
- (1) Field Operations Tech II to (1) Field Operations Tech I
- (5) Field Operations Tech III to (5) Field Operations Tech II

Personnel Job Reclassifications (Certification Promotions):

- Building Safety (4.0)
 - (2.0) Inspector II to Inspector III
 - (2.0) Permit Technician Certification
- Building & Grounds (2.0)
 - (2.0) Building Maintenance. Tech I to Building Maintenance. Tech II
- Road Dept. (1.0)
 - (1.0) Equipment Operator I to Equipment Operator II

FY2024 Maintenance & Operations

Significant operational budget considerations include:

Employee Benefits Allocation was approximately \$16.8M, including the healthcare and retirement contributions that the County makes.

Road Resurfacing was estimated at \$3.4M, set aside in Technical Services/Hauling/Asphalt. These services include Micro, Hauling, Tack, and HA5 that will cover 1.5 Miles of road paving and 33.5 miles of pavement preservation.

Defined Benefit Allocation FY2024 will be approximately \$1.4M across the various funds.

Defined Contribution Allocation was \$800k for the Employer Retirement Contribution.

Inmate Medical was a \$1.41M Contract that was gradually increasing due to the increased cost related to Inmate Medical Claims.

LMIG (Local Maintenance Improvement Grant) set aside \$1.17M for the Road Department expense budget to cover 4.6 miles of State Road Resurfacing, based upon LMIG grant revenue of \$900k.

Property & Casualty Insurance increased to \$890k divided across all funds.

Public Defender Office increased to \$427k largely due to the new Lower Court contract and will affect FY2024.

The impact from the Constitutional, Elected, and Griffin Judicial Circuit 12.5% increased that was built into the budget was \$64,653.

Grant Match Funding was \$250k for anticipated future required grant match funds.

Tyler Software was budgeted at \$520k. Of that, \$276k was in reserves for any potential additional modules and processes.

Public Information Officer marketing promotion budget was allocated at \$125k.

GIS Services was set at \$120k to augment GIS systems analysis and architecture.

Legal Litigation budget increased by \$75k to account for any potential litigation.

Board of Commissioner Chamber and Staff Chairs allocation of \$35k.

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) budget was allocated at \$135k for membership fees. The ARC provided \$604k contribution towards senior services and operations.

Wellness Program budgeted an additional \$50k for future employee initiatives.

Recreation allocated \$348k for the various recreation programs.

General Fund Transfers

Ms. Weinmann stated that for the Vehicle/Equipment replacement, the General Fund committed \$725,000, Fire \$650,000 and EMS \$350,000. \$325,000 will be transferred to the Jail Surcharge to cover inmate meals. \$50k was transferred to Solid Waste to offset \$125k of post closure landfill costs. The General Fund transfer was improved \$130k over last year based upon new vendor operations. She continued that the Victim's Assistance will require \$30k to fund its shortfall. Worker's Compensation was budgeted at \$710,072 for anticipated costs.

Significant Operational Budget Considerations:

Fire Services / EMS

- \$82k Bunker Gear Purchase
- \$40k Various Fire Station Facility Improvements
- \$46k Paramedic Training
- \$26k Firefighter Cancer Insurance Premium
- \$35k Pharmaceutical Supplies
- \$23k Medical Advisor & Chaplain Services
- \$33k EMS Licensing/Professional Fees
- \$67k Medical Services
- \$35k EMS Pharmaceutical Supplies
- \$164k EMS Medical Supplies
- \$88k EMS Billing Services

911

- \$425k Carbyne Project Operating License
- \$324k AT&T/Megalink Landline Agreement
- \$132k Cell Tower Leases

Water System

Chemicals - \$891k Crosstown and South Fayette contracts
Engineering Services - \$353k EOR Consulting & Design Services
USGS - \$282k - Stream Monitoring for Permit Requirement
Utility Locate Services - \$230k Large Project Locates
Leak Protection - \$150k Reimbursement for repaired leaks

Outside Agency budgets

Ms. Weinman stated that the Public Defender increase was 69.7%; about \$1.04M due to the \$610k for the Lower State Court contract. Senior Services required a small increase of \$30k to cover fund program shortfall. She noted that with the Fayette County Development Authority there was a change. The County would not provide the regular \$226k contribution as in the past. The budgeted \$13k was for utilities that will be reimbursed. There was not a change in the Mental Health Services with the budget remaining at \$210k. Cooperative Extension office budget would increase 11.9% to account for the 12.5% salary adjustment that the County pays. Both the Department of Public Health's and Department of Family and Children Services' budget remain the same.

Capital Improvement Plan, Expenditures and Vehicle/ Equipment

Ms. Weinman advised that the green highlighted items noted on the PowerPoint presentation were newly funded items. The non-highlighted items were already in affect with an existing balance or will have balances in the future. She highlighted the Public Health Building, additions to the Fayette County Library, several Parks and Recreation projects, State Court projects, the Road Department and the Sheriff's Office projects. She stated that FY2024 five-year CIP was set at \$6.9M. \$2.5M was just the FY2024 funding but all was set aside in Fund Balance throughout the various funds.

Ms. Weinman stated that the Vehicle/Equipment totaled almost \$2.3M and included \$400k for a new ambulance to be filled with the ten new Fire/EMS FTE, 4 Sheriff Office vehicles at \$400k, and two pumpers at 1.4M.

She provided a brief overview of FY2023 closed projects. These are projects that are to be closed during FY2023 where funds are being moved into project contingency or out of project contingency.

Revenues are above expenses. The relationship between population and staffing increased due to the 10 new full-time position. Fayette County current population was population of 122,684.

Unincorporated Fayette County was ranked number 16 of 19 for the lowest millage rate across several local counties.

Ms. Weinmann concluded the presentation with the following budget highlights:

- No Millage Rate Change – Requires Advertising as Property Tax Increase
- General Fund impact from maintenance & operations is positive.
- Proposed Budget increases General Fund Balance \$394,123
- Funds Rolling 5 Year Capital Improvement Program of \$6,975,732
- Changes in Personnel levels protect the existing outstanding service delivery to our citizens.
- Budget continues to maintain the commitment to balance current year revenues with current year expenses.
- Maintains Employee Benefits – Medical/Dental/Vision & Retirement
- County-Wide departmental cooperation continues to yield positive results.

The first public hearing will be held on Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. and the second public hearing and budget adoption will be held Thursday, June 22, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Rapson stated that based on an agreement with the Fayette County School System the 3 new full-time School Resources Officers would be placed in Fayette County Elementary schools and would be paid and equipped 100% through Fayette County School Board this year. In future years the officers' salaries would be divided into 10-months and paid equally by Fayette County and Fayette County School Board. He stated this was a great collaborative partnership with the Fayette County School Board. He noted that on slides 55 and 56, regarding closing projects and moving contingency – these funds would be swept into their

respective department for future project contingency funding. Once completed this would total just over \$500K in the General Fund, \$165K in Emergency and Medical Services Fund, \$328K in Fire, and just over \$74K in Recreation. He added that these monies remain in these funds until direction was received from the Board. He concluded that the 10 new full-time employees in Fire and Emergency Medical Services was to get the seventh ambulance fully operational.

Chairman Hearn asked where the seventh ambulance would be assigned.

Chief Hill stated that although this was still being reviewed and determined, tentatively it would be stationed at the new Station #2 on State Route 92.

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

Commissioner Rousseau commended Ms. Weinman and her team for putting the budget presentation together. He asked if there had been any analysis done on increasing various fees and fines throughout the County.

Mr. Rapson stated that the fees and fines scale had been reviewed last year and was typically done every other year. But could be reviewed again if directed to do so.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that he would like to see an analysis/review of the fees and fines. He stated that he felt there was room for potential increases as it related to the various fees and fines charged by the County.

Mr. Rapson stated that staff intended on initiating a fee/fine increase when the new Recreation Facility was completed.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that would be good for the recreational portion but there were other administrative fees that needed to be reviewed that were separate from Parks and Recreation. He stated that a spreadsheet that included current fees/fines and any recommended fees increased would be beneficial. Commissioner Rousseau asked if it would be permissible for the County to do a one-time bonus for the Department of Public Health and Department of Family and Children Services staff.

Mr. Rapson stated that the County had never done that before, however, that did mean that it could not be done or was not being done in other counties or jurisdiction. He stated that Department of Public Health and Department of Family and Children Services employees were State employees. He noted that the County had a different relationship with staff at the Justice Center.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that he would like to look at the analysis of a one-time recommendation for Board consideration to give a bonus for Department of Public Health and Department of Family and Children Services staff- acknowledging their hard work and dedication during the pandemic. Commissioner Rousseau also stated that he would like an analysis of the attrition, recruitment, and retention rate over the last 3-years for the Sheriff's Office. He stated that obviously the Board was hoping the previous 29% increase (over the last three years) would assist with retention and recruitment. He noted that this was a nationwide issue and depending on if there had been any incremental changes, he was open to "thinking outside" the box for other incentives that could help with retention and recruitment efforts.

Mr. Rapson stated that an 18-month analysis could be readily provided. A three-year analysis could be more difficult.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that the 18-month analysis would work.

Commissioner Rousseau stated that in reviewing the budget information he noticed that almost 20% in debt service for Water System and asked if there were any plans on the horizon on how to reduce that number.

Ms. Weinman stated that the debt services was recently refinanced which shortened the amount.

Mr. Rapson added that the refinance shortened the amount of debt and staff was anticipating being debt-free in about four to five years. He also noted that the percentage noted in the presentation was a percent of the total budget and not a reflection of the actual debt load.

Chairman Hearn stated that he routinely touched basis with Sheriff Department and before the recruitment and retention adjustments was implemented a few years ago there was about 34 vacancies. About 9-months later it had decreased to the teens, so the adjustment did make a difference. Chairman Hearn asked what the 4.4% Debt Services in the General Fund was for.

Ms. Weinman stated that this was the Public Facilities Authority, which was the refinancing of the Criminal Justice Center.

Chairman Hearn asked if there was a timeline on when that would be paid off.

Mr. Rapson stated that he would provide those debt services schedules to the Board.

Vice Chairman Gibbons gave a shout out to Public Works and the Road Department on the great shape of Peters Road on the Fayette County side. He stated that if there had been any discussion of intersection improvement at Peters Road and State Route 92.

Public Works Director Phil Mallon offered comments from the audience (inaudible).

Vice Chairman Gibbons stated that intersection improvements at Peters Road and State Route 92 may be worth looking into.

Commissioner Oddo commended all who assisted with the budget presentation.

Chairman Hearn also expressed his appreciation and relayed a job well done with the budget preparation.

No vote was taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Oddo moved to adjourn the May 25, 2023 Special Called meeting. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

The May 25, 2023 Special Called meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Marlena M. Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk

Lee Hearn, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 8th day of June 2023. Attachments are available upon request at the County Clerk's Office.

Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk