

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 29, 2024
5:00 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 29, 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present. Commissioner Maxwell and Commissioner Rousseau were absent.

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 3-0.

BUDGET PRESENTATION:

1. County Administrator Steve Rapson and Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Weinmann will provide a presentation regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

Fayette County Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Weinmann provided the Board a presentation regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

Economic Outlook

In review of the economic outlook, Ms. Weinmann highlighted some of the surrounding cities/counties in Metro Atlanta vacancy rates noting that Fayette County rate was at 7.7%, calculated as the number of vacancies divided by the FTE's. The annual inflation rate for the United States is 3.4% for the 12 months ending April 2024. She stated that this was forecasted to remain above the Fed's target of 2.0% through 2024. She stated that challenges of hiring new employees for vacant positions resulted in an increase in the unemployment rate in Fayette County from 2.6% in March 2022 to 3.5% in August 2023. As of March 2024, the unemployment rate has fallen to 2.9%. Ms. Weinmann pointed out that allowing remote work is one of the most common recommendations to curb employee retention challenges. Since the inception of Fayette County's Hybrid Teleworking Program, the results have been positive and employee morale has increased.

Budget Principles

Fayette County has followed these principles for several years. Revenues are conservatively projected and based on detailed trending and other analysis. The County does 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 is a continued commitment of delivering outstanding customer service. There is a plan for a millage rate rollback this year which means no tax increase. Since 2013, due to previous rollbacks, the saving to the citizens of Fayette County is over \$81.5 million. The new budget included a full five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of \$6,061,021 and is allocated within the General Fund Balance. Employee benefits have been maintained and strengthening the medical reserves. Currently the stabilization is at \$1.5M and the plan is to increase it to \$2M in FY2025, and to continue to maintain insurance for staff.

Benefit Highlights

Ms. Weinman stated that there were no changes to the benefits from last year. 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 \$4,000 for family. This goes into effect after the \$3,000 deductible was met. The other plan is 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. She noted that there had only been one employee premium increase in the past 11 years, in FY2021 for the HSA Plan where employee had to pay an additional \$5 to \$15 depending on the tier of coverage you received. The deductible for the POS plan remained the same: Individual tier –remains at \$5,000 and Family tier – remains at \$10,000. For the HDHP the deductibles remained the same for the individual tier at \$3,000 and will remain the same for family tier at \$5,000. She highlighted that the HDHP plan for individual within a family deductible increased to \$3,200, per IRS regulations. Ms. Weinmann 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 typically received a \$50,000 credit for employee wellness programs and initiatives but that was increased to \$60,000 credit this year to be divided up between the Health Wellness Initiatives and allocated expenses. The county would also be funding an additional \$80k to be used for Employee Appreciation, Health Mobile Screenings, and the Health Fair. Utilization of the digital lifestyle app, Omada, that helps employees get healthier by losing weight and incorporating healthy lifestyle activities. The Pharmaceutical Cigna 90Now program requires employees to get 90-day supply of maintenance medications for a greater cost savings for both the employee and employer.

Ms. Weinmann noted CIGNA Virgin Pulse health engagement program, Improved Healthy Pregnancy/Healthy Babies Benefit for CIGNA medical plan members; increase to \$400 in first trimester and \$200 in second trimester. She stated that improved long term disability monthly benefit increased \$5,000 to \$10,000 to cover annual incomes up to \$200,000. Ms. Weinmann also stated that improved FSA contribution limit increased by \$150 to \$3,200.

She continued highlighting the 98point6 – Primary Care Physician, Omada, and Alliant Medicare Solutions and the benefits of each.

General Fund

The financial projection for FY2024 fund balance was \$30,766,512. Of this amount the inventories fund was estimated at \$250K. The Stabilization Fund increases to \$19.9 million based on the proposed M&O budget of expenses, which is three-months of expenses in case of emergencies. The emergencies fund remained the same at \$2M and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) amount was \$6M. This would leave the County with an unassigned budget of \$2.4M.

Budget Summary

Ms. Weinmann stated that the budget for the General Fund leaves a positive impact of \$428,048. She stated that although some of the operating budgets appear to be in a deficit based upon revenues and expenses, they have an overall positive fund balance

and thus will not have a negative impact to the actual Fund Balance. She noted that the Capital and CIP budgets were also included.

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 3% related to limited growth and rolling back reassessments. Sales taxes are the second largest source of revenue. The local options sales tax revenue was coming in about \$18.5 over FY2024 estimated budget. She stated that other taxes included occupational tax certificates. TAVT FY2025 budget is \$7.8M. The local options sales tax revenue budget in FY2025 is projected at \$19M. She noted that property taxes, sales taxes, and TAVT make up 82% of the revenues.

General Fund Expenditures

Public Safety costs remain the largest expenditure in the General Fund at 41%, followed by General Government at 18.1% and Public Works at 15%. She stated that the Debt Service totaling 4.2% was for the Criminal Justice Center and final payment for that was expected to be in 2030. Transfers which were at 1.9% and included transfers to various other like vehicles and equipment. Ms. Weinmann added that the second way to review expenditure was by type, with Personnel costs making up the largest expense at 64.3%, followed by services of 22.6%.

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 37.2% and the charges for services at 63.0%.

911 Fund Expenditures

Personnel costs are at 64.0% and services are 25.2%. Services include is \$296k for the Carbyne project, 477k for the AT&T/Megalink landline agreement and \$135k for the cell tower leases.

Fire Fund Revenues

Almost 95% of this revenue is sourced via property taxes. This property tax also an insurance premium tax which is put into the fire fund revenues and budgeted at \$5M this year and slightly increases each year.

Fire Fund Expenditures

Personnel cost are 82.1%. The transfers are the \$650,000 to Vehicle/Equipment Fund.

EMS Revenues

Revenues are almost split at 49.9% for Service and 50.1% for Property taxes. The charges for services are the ambulance transports. The millage rate is 0.5.

EMS Fund Expenditures

The personnel cost is at 71.1% and transfers are \$350,000 to the Vehicle/Equipment Fund.

Water System Fund Revenues

The water sales account for about 83% of all revenues for the Water System. Water System Fund also receives contributed capital which comes from the various contractors installing waterlines. And the leak protection charge is at 4.7%.

Water System Expenses

The Water System has several functions. Water System transfers include the \$3.2M CIP as well as administrative cost, water billing, South Fayette and Crosstown Water Plants. Field operations is also a large expense because that is where most of the operations functions take place. Water System Bond Debt is currently at 17.8% with the last payment scheduled for October 2026.

Proposed Personnel Changes

Budget includes funding for 805.51 County Wide 793 full-time 30 part-time positions equivalent to 12.51 FTEs

FTE count is up 2.2%, 17.275 net, from FY2024

Fire / EMS Training Facility- 2 Fire Lieutenants

Sheriff Training Facility- 3 Sheriff Lieutenants

Health Building -2 Building & Grounds Custodians; 1 Building & Grounds Maintenance Tech

Animal Control Building -1 Animal Control Officer

Fire Services- 4 Firefighter/AEMT

Sheriff's Office Support -1CJIS Network Operator

Human Resources -1.0 Information System Analyst

Environmental Management -1 Utility Manager 1

District Attorney -1 Victim Advocate

Building & Grounds - PT Custodian

Library - 3 PT Librarians

Personnel Changes Title Change

Purchasing

- Purchasing Director to Chief Procurement Officer

Water System

- Customer Response Foreman to AMI Customer Response Supervisor
- Damage Response Foreman to Customer Support Supervisor

Commissioners

- Administrative Assistant to Admin. Records Coordinator

Purchasing

- Contract Administrator to Sr. Contract Administrator

Water System

- Field Technician III to Account Service Analyst
- Customer Support Manager to AMI Customer Support Manager

Sheriff Support

- Deputy Sheriff to Investigator
- Lieutenant to Captain
- 2 Sergeant to Lieutenant
- 2 Administrative Assistant to Administrative Specialist

Sheriff CID

- Investigator to Sergeant

Building Safety

- Inspector II to Inspector III
- 2 Inspector I to Inspector II
- Permit Technician Certification

Road Dept

- Equipment Operator II to Equipment Operator III
- 3 Equipment Operator I to Equipment Operator II

Tax Assessor

- 3 Property Appraiser III to Property Appraiser IV
- Property Appraiser I to Property Appraiser II

Sheriff's Office

- 2 Dog Handler Supplement 2 New K-9 Dogs

Water System

- 2 Plant Operator II to Plant Operator I
- 6 Plant Operator III to Plant Operator II
- Plant Maintenance Tech II to Plant Maintenance Tech I
- 2 Plant Maintenance Tech III to Plant Maintenance Tech II
- Field Operations Tech II to Field Operations Tech I
- 2 Field Operations Tech III to Field Operations Tech II

Ms. Weinman stated that the County was proposing a increase to minimum wage to \$16 per hour.

She advised that Personnel Pay study would review and update the classification and Compensation Plan for the following departments: Building & Grounds, Fleet Maintenance, Road Department, Solid Waste Department.

This would help remedy recruitment issues and staffing challenges and help the County remain competitive the project was proposed to begin July 1, 2024 with a final report by December. The Personnel Pay study cost was \$19,043 budgeted in Human Resource.

Proposed Forced Merit

Ms. Weinmann stated that merit distribution was allocated based upon performance and performance evaluations and uses the same approach for the merit adjustment as used in the past, following our Personnel Policies 408.13 (Performance Pay) and 412.01 (Performance Appraisal), for a distribution of funds for performance pay. The alternative approach is to use a forced ranking system of a Bell Curve as a management tool to allocate merit pay. Based upon the department employee population, breakpoints within the curve are determined and applied to ascertain employee performance pay. The alternative approach was to use a forced ranking system of a Bell Curve as a management tool to allocate merit pay.

Mathematically the weighted percentage required to implement a forced ranking merit-based system would be 3.75% of total county payroll of eligible employees. The majority of employees would fall into average performers of 1.25%-2.50%-5.00% with top performers receiving a 6.25% increase.

The county had 40 Departments. Of these 40, 11 have more than 20 FTEs. Smaller departments use a combination of employee performance evaluations and the forced ranking system.

Who was eligible?

All regular full-time and part-time employees who are in good standing, not subject to a Performance Improvement Plan, and are employed as of 12/31/2023. Full-time and part-time employees who are at the maximum step with their respective grade, are in good standing, not subject to a Performance Improvement Plan, and are employed as of 12/31/2023 will receive a one-time performance payment in lieu of merit.

Ineligible Employees:

Employees who are currently subject to a Performance Improvement Plan; elected officials, board members, seasonal or temporary workers (including temporary election clerks and poll workers); Employees in grant funded positions; Employees in positions funded through the Griffin Judicial Circuit. Employees who are no longer employed at time of distribution.

She stated that the distribution of the merit increase across all funds was a total of \$2,192,793, averaging 3.75%.

Mr. Rapson asked if there were any questions.

Chairman Hearn asked once the Pay Study was completed, and results were provided how would recommended changes in pay be implemented.

Ms. Weinmann stated that once the results were received, they would be presented before the Board as a budget adjustment for review and consideration.

Mr. Rapson added that the budget adjustments could be funded utilizing vacancy saving available across the organization.

Chairman Hearn asked if all positions are full funded within the Budget.

Mr. Rapson stated yes, all positions are funded 100%.

FY2025 Maintenance & Operations

Defined Benefit Allocation – \$2.9M Allocation (across funds) which includes an additional \$2.5M allocation

Defined Contribution Allocation – \$790k Employer Retirement Contribution

Deferred Compensation Allocation – \$936k Employer 2.5% Match

Road Resurfacing – \$2.9M Technical Services/Hauling/Asphalt - includes Road Resurfacing (Includes Micro, Hauling, Tack, HA5 etc.) 2 Miles Road Paving, Micro/HA5 15 miles & 20 Miles Pavement Preservation

LMIG24 Supplement – \$1.17M No Match; 1.7 Miles Road Paving; HIP & Micro, Micro 4.6 Miles

LMIG25 – \$1.17M State Road Resurfacing Allocation; Road Resurfacing 3.9 Miles; Micro 2.9 Miles

Inmate Medical – \$1.725M Contract/Specialty Care; \$153k Inmate Medical Claims

Property & Casualty Insurance – \$948k (Across all Funds)

Grant Match Funding (Admin) \$125k Future Required Grant Match

Tyler Software - \$259k non-departmental

PIO Marketing Promotion (Admin) \$150k Marketing and Promotion

GIS Services \$150k to augment GIS systems' analysis and architecture

Legal Litigation \$100k; inc. \$50k Additional Settlement Funding

Chamber BOC \$35k Furniture Refreshment/Enhancements

ARC – \$152k membership fees; ARC provides \$745k contribution towards senior services and operations

Wellness Program (HR) \$80k Future Employee Initiatives

Recreation – \$348k Recreation programs
(\$150k PTC, \$100k Self-Sustaining, \$60k FCBOE, \$18k Tyrone, \$20k programming)

Ms. Weinmann stated that for the Vehicle/Equipment replacement, the General Fund commits \$725,000, Fire commits \$650,000 and EMS commits \$350,000. \$325,000 will be transferred to the Jail Surcharge to cover inmate meals. \$100k transferred to Solid Waste to offset post closure landfill costs; the General Fund transfer was improved by \$130k over last year based upon new vendor operations. She continued stating that the Victim's Assistance will require \$40k to fund its shortfall. Worker's Compensation is budgeted at \$750k for anticipated costs. Ms. Weinman highlighted the listed items of considerations pointing out that 911 overtime was for \$175k and not \$175 as noted.

Significant Operational Budget Considerations:

Fire Services / EMS

\$110k Bunker Gear Purchase

\$23k Paramedic Training

\$28k Firefighter Cancer Insurance Premium

\$40k Pharmaceutical Supplies

\$30k Medical Advisor & Chaplain Services

\$23k EMS Licensing/Professional Fees

\$26k Stryker Equipment

\$114k Medical Services

\$40k EMS Pharmaceutical Supplies

\$164k EMS Medical Supplies

\$98k EMS Billing Services

\$500k Fire Overtime

\$140k EMS Overtime

911

\$296k Carbyne Project Operating License

\$477k AT&T/Megalink Landline Agreement

\$150k Surveillance Equipment Security System Upgrade

\$135k Cell Tower Leases

\$175K Overtime

Water System

Chemicals - \$924k Crosstown and South Fayette contracts

Engineering Services - \$353k EOR Consulting & Design Services

Meters & Water Line - \$282k Maintenance & Repairs

USGS - \$279k - Stream Monitoring for Permit Requirement

Utility Locate Services - \$415k Large Project Locates
Leak Protection - \$200k Reimbursement for repaired leaks
Software Maintenance - \$413k Annual Maintenance & Subscriptions

Ms. Weinman stated that currently the Public Defender Budget was \$.057M -with a proposed 19k increase to \$629k for the lower court state contract. Additionally, staff was proposing, if the Board agreed, to provide a 6.25% increase to Public Defender salaries.

Outside Agency budgets
Public Defender – \$1.057M; inc. \$19k to \$629k Lower State Ct Contract
Senior Services – \$484k; \$35k inc. Drivers Hourly Increase
FC Dev Authority – \$13k Utilities Reimbursement; No change
Mental Health Services – \$210k; No change
Cooperative Extension – \$178k; No change
Department of Public Health – \$85k; No change
Dept. Family & Children Services – \$39k; No change

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 concluded stating that FY2025 five-year CIP was set at \$6,061,021. She noted that very few agencies are able to fund their full 5-year CIP budget out of Fund Balance, this was an accomplishment.

Ms. Weinman stated that the Vehicle/Equipment totaled almost \$2.3M and included two pumpers at 1.2M and 12 Sheriffs Office vehicles at \$788k.

Revenues are above expenses. The relationship between population and staffing has increased. Fayette County current population was Population of 122,684.

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

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

- Millage Rate Rollback / No Tax Increase
- General Fund impact from maintenance & operations is positive.
- Proposed Budget increases General Fund Balance \$428,048
- Funds Rolling 5 Year Capital Improvement Program of \$6,061,021
- 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 13, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. and the second public hearing and budget adoption will be held Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Rapson stated that what sets us apart from other County's is our 14-year AAA standing, Fayette County was one of only five with that distinction. Also, very rarely can county's fund their vehicles, equipment, and staffing needs. Fayette County is very strategic in our planning and budgetary process, and this sets us apart.

Mr. Rapson extended his kudos to the Finance Department for a job well done in putting the budget together it was an arduous process. As well as all the coordinating departments and elected officials and offices that worked to get this done.

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

Chairman Hearn expressed his appreciation for the hard work and dedication expended in putting this budget together.

Commissioner Oddo extended a job well done to all involved and “tipped his hat” for all their hard work and effort.

Vice Chairman Gibbons extended a well done to staff.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Oddo moved to adjourn the May 29, 2024 Special Called meeting. Vice Chairman Gibbons seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

The May 29, 2024 Special Called meeting adjourned at 4:47 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 13th day of June 2023. Attachments are available upon request at the County Clerk’s Office.

Marlena Edwards, Chief Deputy County Clerk