

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held their a Special Called Meeting in Room 108 in the Courthouse Annex, Wednesday, June 17, 2009, beginning at 6:00 o'clock p.m. with Commission Chairman Edward Goss, Jr. presiding and Commissioners Gwen Flowers-Taylor, Eddie L. Freeman, Bob Gilreath and David Phillips present. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson, Jr., County Attorney James R. Fortune, Jr. and Teresa Watson to record minutes.

I. OPENING (Call to Order) – Chairman Edward Goss, Jr.

II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Lift from the Table:

A. Consider, on first reading, the Spalding County FY 2010 Budget Ordinance.

Motion/second to lift by Commissioners Flowers-Taylor/Freeman carried 5-0.

Commissioner Gilreath said he was glad to see such good attendance and read from a prepared statement. He stated the Board had worked tirelessly throughout the budgetary process, noting they had practiced due diligence.

Commissioner Gilreath made a motion to approve the budget as presented except:

i The \$17,500 for UGA Continuing Education shall be removed.

ii The recommended tax increase shall be increased to 1 mill from the previously recommended .8 mill.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and discussion followed.

Mr. Wilson said the property tax on a \$100,000 home, with a 1 mill tax increase, would add about \$38 annually to the property tax bill. The Fire District tax was .2

mills, and he hoped that the digest in the unincorporated areas of the County would go up to offset it, but if not the increase would be \$2.58 accordingly.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor advised she was very disappointed to see the .725 mill increased to .8 mill previously and now to a full 1 mill. She reminded all that County residents would pay this year the HTRG that won't be funded. Her responsibility was to the taxpayers and many are seniors, low income, on very limited monthly incomes. She reminded County employees they should feel blessed to have a job with benefits when so many are unemployed. Many employees don't live in the County and she had a problem with drawing salaries from Spalding and paying taxes in another County. Contrary to Commissioner Freeman's statement that most of his constituency were more upset with the anticipated closing of days at the recycling centers than the tax increase, citizens in her district were more concerned with the tax increase.

Commissioner Phillips said there had not been a tax increase in three years, noting everything else has increased tremendously. This is not a perfect budget and commissioners are a very diverse group with polarizing opinions, but he noted they had worked hard to reach a consensus. He hoped everyone will understand that the County has obligations, and he felt this was the right thing to do to achieve a balance.

Chairman Goss thanked everyone for coming to this meeting and encouraged participation. When he ran for office, his platform was to not vote for a tax increase. He stands by that promise even though this is the worst budget process he has experienced in his seven years. None of the alternatives that were bantered about were palatable to everyone; no matter how the budget process goes, some will be unhappy. He does, however, feel he has done what he thought was right.

Commissioner Phillips called the question.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked why Commissioner Gilreath chose to remove UGA's Griffin Campus funding of \$17,500 which didn't even come from the general fund but rather from hotel/motel tax fund. Commissioner Gilreath responded he had yet to see that funding justified or any accounting of it from UGA. Commissioner Gilreath called the question again.

Motion carried 3-2 with Commissioners Goss and Flowers-Taylor opposing.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second by Commissioner Goss and Gilreath to adjourn at 6:21 p.m. carried 5-0.

Chairman

County Clerk