

MINUTES

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing in Room 108 in the Courthouse Annex, Monday, September 23, 2013, beginning at 11:00 a.m. with Chairman Gwen Flowers-Taylor presiding. Commissioners Raymond Ray, Rita Johnson and Bart Miller were present. Also present were Community Development Director Chad Jacobs, Administrative Services Director Jinna Garrison and County Clerk, Ex-Officio Ricky L. Clark Jr. to record the minutes. Vice Chairman Chipper Gardner & County Manager William Wilson were not present.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER)

II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Conduct Public Hearing to receive comments on the notice of proposed property tax increase

Phillip Head- 118 N. Hill Street Griffin, Georgia

Mr. Head stated that he is concerned about his property located on North 8th street across from the Post Office. Mr. Head noted that the taxes on this building were \$2,699.01 for 2011, \$4,233.63 for 2012. When Mr. Head went to check on the increase of taxes in 2012, he was told it was too late to appeal. Mr. Head noted that his taxes are now \$4,233.63 for this year. Mr. Head requested some type of explanation.

Sadie Rogers- 305 Southgate Drive Griffin, Georgia

Ms. Rogers stated that she is a resident of Heron Bay and is present to speak on behalf of herself and her neighbors. Ms. Rogers advised that she is not trying to get out of paying she just wants to ensure that their property values are assessed equally and fairly. Ms. Rogers stated that she has been to the tax assessor's office for the past three (3) years to find some form of resolution for the inaccuracies in valuing their properties. The issue on their street is that the houses look very similar but are not the same. Some of the houses are bigger than other houses; however, the bigger houses have a lower tax rate than those that live in a smaller house. Furthermore, Ms. Rogers noted that there is a new water tower in their back yard and they are not able to get water from it; instead, they are having to pay Henry County for water. Mrs. Rogers also noted that if she calls 911, they get the Henry County 911 and then have to be transferred to Spalding 911, totaling an average 15 minutes response time. In closing, Ms. Rogers stated that elected officials don't even come to their area due to Heron Bay being so far away.

Joyce Adams- 102 Kathy Lane Griffin, Georgia

Ms. Adams stated that since the tax payers are responsible for the commissioners' salary, she would appreciate if the commissioners would stop saying one thing and something opposite showing up in the paper. Ms. Adams urged the Board to tighten their belt and cut spending. Ms. Adams stated that her family was land rich in 1945 and her family had a good name; however, they still spent within reason. Ms. Adams stated that a senior citizen entered the county manager's office with a question and were told that someone would get back with them within a day or so; this never happened. Ms. Adams stated that if the County Manager is out of town, someone should be trained enough to answer citizens questions. Furthermore, Ms. Adams stated that some residents have paid 85% of their taxes, won their appeal and have not been given their refund. Do bomb threats not send some kind of message, asked Ms. Adams? Additionally, Ms. Adams urged the commissioners to listen to what

people want. In closing, Ms. Adams stated that the meetings are inconvenient for those that work.

Sandra Howard- 433 Tululia Drive Griffin, Georgia

Ms. Howard stated that 5-6 years ago Sun City did not exist. Now, there are over 600 homes which bring in over \$6 million dollars in property taxes. Does not make sense that the county cannot operate within budget, noted Ms. Howard. Furthermore, Ms. Howard stated that Sun City is adding 160 homes per year to the tax base and it doesn't seem right that the county cannot budget accordingly. Even though some of the tax base is lost to the schools, it doesn't seem logical how the county could get in such a dire situation. In closing, Ms. Howard noted that many of the property owners have challenged their assessments and have gotten nowhere.

Jerry Brandy- 803 Peach Blossum Court Griffin, Georgia

Mr. Brandy stated that he had a two (2) hour meeting with Chief Assessor Larry Lillard a couple of months ago due to inconsistencies with his property assessment. Mr. Brandy stated that the way the assessments are done is unfair due to inaccuracies such as fireplaces being in the homes and they are not and also the inaccuracies dealing with the number of fixtures in a residence. Mr. Brandy stated that tax payers need to know what the property assessment is based upon. In closing Mr. Brandy suggested the county sending a flyer to residents, once a year, to show what the assessment consists of.

Bart Searcy- 680 E. College Street Griffin, Georgia

Mr. Searcy echoed everything that had been said putting emphasis on the fact that properties are not assessed properly. Mr. Searcy stated that even on his street properties are not assessed properly. Furthermore, Mr. Searcy stated that people of Spalding County do not want another airport.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Miller- NONE

Johnson- Commissioner Johnson thanked everyone for coming out to speak.

Ray- Commissioner Ray thanked everyone for coming out to speak and noted that the Board of Commissioners only sets the millage rate. The assessments are done by the Tax Assessors which are governed by the Board of Assessors.

Flowers-Taylor- Chairman Flowers-Taylor stated that she agreed with most of the comments presented. Furthermore, Chairman Flowers-Taylor stated that a resident asked her to check on property taxes for a particular building valued at \$36,000. After property research, inconsistencies were found, noted Chairman Flowers-Taylor. Additionally, Chairman Flowers-Taylor stated that after speaking with the Tax Assessors Office the issue was corrected. Chairman Flowers-Taylor also commented on the backload of appeals that have not been completed and urged the public and commissioners to put pressure on the Clerk of Court. The goal of the reevaluation was to help address inconsistencies, not hurt citizens. In closing, Chairman Flowers-Taylor stated that she will do everything in her power to change the appeal process to make it more uniform and consistent.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second by Ray/Johnson to adjourn at 11:35 am. Motion carried unanimously by all.

/s/ _____
Chairman

/s/ _____
County Clerk