

Baldwin County Planning Retreat
October 24, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Middle Georgia Regional Commission
175 Emery Highway, Suite C
Macon, Georgia

Commissioners Present

Henry Craig
John Westmoreland
Kendrick Butts
Emily Davis (Virtual)
Sammy Hall

Other County Representatives

David McRee
Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Cindy Cunningham

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Henry Craig called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE / FISCAL MATTERS

Economic Development

Development Authority of Milledgeville / Baldwin County Executive Director Jonathan Jackson presented an update on Development Authority activities. He discussed an outline for development of the Sibley-Smith Industrial Park. He presented an overview of the steps needed in the process and what components are needed to increase the attraction of the site to prospects, state project managers and site selection consultants. Mr. Jackson stated the ultimate goal is increasing the tax digest of Baldwin County and creating jobs for the area through attraction and location of industries to the park.

He discussed the initial phase - Phase Green – which is the entrance to the park and roadway and subsequent proposed phases. Mr. Jackson reported approximately thirty percent (30%) of the engineering work on the water / sewer has been done, and he would like to continue with this as well as working with DOT for roadwork and getting signage at the entrance.

Commissioners discussed upcoming SPLOST funds with collections beginning in 2024 and also possible in-kind work that County forces could do. Commissioners stated good cost estimates are needed for the County to know what amount of money would be required. Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson also stated the Board would have to make the decision regarding a bond issue for SPLOST projects prior to the referendum; therefore, accurate cost estimates are extremely important.

2023 Budget

County Manager Carlos Tobar reported staff members are in the process of applying for a number of grants. Grants for the aquatic center are being developed and letters of support are being solicited as well as monetary support. This will give the County more rating points on the application.

Discussion was held regarding an increase in transit fares. A proposal was to phase in an increase by \$1.00 in six - month increments: \$3.00 in six months; \$4.00 after additional six months and \$5.00 after additional six months with fee capped at \$5.00 per ride.

Commissioner Davis expressed concern that citizens who need the transit system would not be able to afford the increase in fee.

Commissioner Butts asked if the County can do anything to assist tenants whose landlords will not repair their rental property. County Manager Tobar responded that the only recourse would be for the County to change the property standards ordinance to have Code Enforcement officials go into the property. Commissioner Davis disagreed with County Code Enforcement going into residences.

Discussion was held on the following items that affect the proposed 2023 budget: County dispatch for ambulance; retention and competitive compensation of County employees, especially those with great responsibilities such as department heads; cross training for backup in positions.

Commissioners requested that administrative staff review grades/steps for key positions and the associated costs.

Assistant County Manager Hudson presented the budget calendar and a budget summary for the FY 23 budget. She stated a line by line item budget will be presented to the Board prior to the Public Hearing and release of the proposed budget document.

Ms. Hudson reported a fleet management proposal from Enterprise was brought to her by the Sheriff's Department. The proposal provides a fleet management planning analysis for maintenance and replacement of the County's vehicles. She stated the Enterprise Representative was unable to attend the meeting; however, a representative will address the Board at a later date regarding this matter.

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

Assistant County Manager stated she has reached out to the City Manager for discussion of the next SPLOST. As of this date, there have been no response to schedule meetings for discussion. Ms. Hudson stated there are a lot of County needs - \$31,520,996 for the total seven-year period through FY 2029, and this list is not inclusive of all needs.

Solid Waste

County Manager discussed a proposal of a transfer station on the front property at the landfill. He stated this could bring in revenue which could reduce help with the solid waste fees. He stated he would like to continue to move forward with these conversations. Commissioner Hall asked how much it would cost and how would it be funded. He also recommended discussion with EPD prior to taking any steps on this matter.

Commissioners stated they have all gotten calls about the service being provided by Waste Management. Bins at the convenience centers are not being emptied regularly which causes citizens not to be able to place waste in the containers which in turn means a messy site. Discussion was held that the Code Enforcement Officer could monitor the centers to see if bins are being emptied regularly.

Service Delivery Strategy

County Manager Tobar reported since the County will be applying for CHIP and CDBG grants each year to include housing components, the Service Delivery Strategy must have a Housing Form for this service. The Comprehensive Plan has a housing component, and he proposes the County adopt a Housing Form for the SDS and forward it to the City.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vice Chairman John Westmoreland stated he felt the increase in Food Service fees for the Health Department would have been approved if the fees could have been phased in rather than an increase all at one time.

Chairman Craig stated he felt it would be in the best interest of the County to have staggered election cycles for Commissioners. He requested that Commissioners think about this and have further discussion on the matter.

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry R. Craig
Chairman

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk