

Draft
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 3, 2008

The Finance Committee of the DeKalb County Board, met on Wednesday, September 3, 2008 @ 7:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Michael Haines called the meeting to order. Members present were Jerry Augsburger, Vince Faivre, Julia Fullerton, Roger Steimel and Ruth Anne Tobias. Mr. Hulseberg was absent. Others present were Ray Bockman, Gary Hanson, Christine Johnson, Aaron Ruder, Karen Grush, Joan Berkes-Hanson and Greg Millburg. There was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Ms. Tobias, seconded by Mr. Augsburger, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from June 2008.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Steimel, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

CITIZEN-CENTRIC REPORTING

Ms. Tobias approached the committee about a report that was generated by the Association of Government Accountants' initiative to encourage governments to provide meaningful and understandable information about the financial condition of the government to its citizens. It would help our citizens to understand what our budget is like and how it has changed over time, said Ms. Tobias. She then passed out a sample report about Virginia Beach, Virginia, so that the committee could see what she is speaking about. It is very straightforward and simple for citizens to understand, as you can see in this report, she continued.

Mr. Augsburger asked Ms. Tobias if there has been any demand for this type of product?

Ms. Tobias said no.

Mr. Haines asked if our auditors could do this?

Ms. Tobias said if you pay them to do it.

Mr. Augsburger asked how much would this cost?

Ms. Tobias said that she just thought that it would be worth looking into, whatever the committee wanted to do.

Mr. Tobias said that she feels there are a variety of ways to reach the public with this report, like websites.

Mr. Haines said that we already pay for an audit, maybe it could be part of the parameters of the job description for the auditors that could be revised to include this report without raising a fee.

Mr. Haines asked Mr. Hanson if we could ask our auditors about this report?

Mr. Hanson said yes he could and will check with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2009 BUDGET

Mr. Hanson, DeKalb County Deputy County Administrator, passed out the FY2009 Administrative Recommendations to the committee members and county board members present this evening. He is asking the committee this evening to recommend to the county board to place this budget on file for public inspection. This will be on the website for the public and other board members to review. There will be a question and answer session held on September 17, 2008 @ 6:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East, just before the county board meeting that evening. He proceeded to review some of the highlights of the Administrative Recommendations.

He explained that the budget is a \$73 million balanced budget that is up from \$69 million in FY2008. He stated that this includes about \$45 (2.2%) million in new construction. The Equalized Assessed Value is expected to increase by over 5.5%, to \$2.2 billion. The tax rate is expected to change from 84.5 cents to .85 cents per \$100 of the Equalized Assessed Value. The average homeowner in the County will see an increase in assessed value of 3.3%. For next year a homeowner should see just a \$22.75 increase in property taxes for County services.

Regarding the tax cap, Mr. Hanson, said that in this budget, it does comply with the tax cap approved by the voters in April, 1999. The limiting factors for the law in FY2009 is a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) rate of 4.1%, plus new construction, currently estimated at 2.2%, for a total of 6.3%.

Chairman Haines said that the question that everyone is going to ask them, is that with a bad real estate market how come our assessed value goes up? As he has explained to people, you're assessed value is based on the sale of comparable properties. Is that correct?

Ms. Tobias said that it is over a particular timeframe, isn't it?

Mr. Bockman said that we should be asking these questions to Margaret Whitwell, DeKalb County Supervisor of Assessments, and have her answer these questions.

Mr. Haines asked if we could invite her to the Budget and Question Session on September 17th to answer any of the county board members' questions?

Mr. Bockman said that if any of the county board members would have questions on assessed values then it makes sense to have her there.

Mr. Hanson then reminded the committee that the Question and Answer Session for the FY2009 Budget will be on Wednesday, September 17, 2008 @ 6:00p.m. in Conference Room East, just before the County Board Meeting. The county board will be asked to place this budget on file. Committee reviews will begin after the September Board meeting through the month of October. At the Finance Meeting in November we will be reconciling the budget and holding the public hearing. Then the county board will be adopting the budget at the November County Board meeting.

Moved by Ms. Fullerton, seconded by Ms. Tobias, and it was carried unanimously to place this report on file for public viewing.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Augsburger, seconded by Ms. Tobias, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Vice-Chairman Vince Faivre