

**Baldwin County Commissioners**  
**Public Hearing on Proposed Property Tax Increase**  
**August 19, 2014**  
**5:15 p.m.**

A Public Hearing on the proposed property tax increase was held Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at 5:15 p.m., Baldwin County Courthouse, Suite 319, 121 North Wilkinson Street, Milledgeville, Georgia with Chair Sammy Hall presiding.

Members Present: Emily C. Davis  
Tommy French  
Sammy Hall  
Henry Craig  
Johnny Westmoreland

Also Present: David McRee  
Ralph McMullen  
Dawn Hudson  
Cindy Cunningham

Call to Order

Chair Sammy Hall called the Public Hearing to order at 5:15 p.m. He stated the County has advertised a proposed increase in the millage rate from 8.84 to 9.84; therefore, three public hearings must be held to solicit public comment regarding the proposed property tax increase. He stated all legal notices have been published for the three hearings. This hearing is the first hearing with the second to be held Thursday, August 21, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. and third to be held Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. The County has advertised that the millage rate will be set Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Proposed Property Tax Increase

Finance Director Dawn Hudson presented information regarding property tax collections, history of M & O digest since 2009, declines in all sources of revenue and the resulting budget cuts, increase in costs of services detailing mandated services, functions or offices, discretionary services and services provided by the County to qualify as a certified government. Ms. Hudson explained what this means to the County – deferred maintenance of County buildings, roads and bridges, no upgrades in technology, outdated aerial photography and mapping, no vehicle / equipment replacement program, deferred replacement of aviation fuel tanks, lack of funds to provide additional firefighters which would improve the ISO rating and inability to provide additional staff for animal control.

Finance Director Hudson discussed the proposed tax levy for 2014. She stated Administrative and Financial staff request the County millage rate be set at 9.84.

Public Comments

Chair Hall opened the floor for public comments from citizens who have signed in to address the Board.

The following people addressed the Board regarding the proposed increase.

Ben Quinn – expressed concern that this increase would affect more people than property owners. He stated it will affect renters who can't afford to pay higher rent.

Hal Reid – stated increase would be deterrent to businesses coming to Milledgeville and Baldwin County. He stated with new businesses at Central State Hospital, new restaurants and a new grocery store there will be growth in Milledgeville. If the rate is increased he felt the increase should be set for three years only.

Gerald Fisher – discussed an increase in his property assessment over the past few years which resulted in his own deferred maintenance to his property. He stated he does not feel the rate should be raised since his value has already been raised.

Tilden Mitchell – asked where extra money collected from additional mill of taxes would be spent.

James Andrews – stated he is opposed to increase because property values have increased over the years, there has been a loss of industry and more people are falling below poverty level.

Ernie Wyatt – requested greater clarification regarding how much the rate will be increased.

Iva Griffin – stated she is against an increase in the County millage rate. She asked where the County taxes are spent and if it being spent where it is supposed to be. She asked whether SPLOST funds are actually spent on projects voted on by citizens.

#### Adjournment

Commissioner Henry Craig made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at 5:55 p.m. Commissioner Tommy French seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sammy Hall  
Chair

Cynthia K. Cunningham  
County Clerk

