

Baldwin County Board of Commissioners

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Service Delivery Strategy

>> SIBLEY-SMITH MEGASITE

In 2016, the Development Authority of the City of Milledgeville and Baldwin County got the City and County to pay for the purchase of 1,500 acres on U.S. 441 for future jobs and industrial development for our community.

This was supposed to be a short-term loan, but the County and City are each paying **approximately \$500 per day in interest on the purchase loan.**

To stop the bleeding of tax dollars on interest, the County proposed and approved last October an agreement to purchase the Megasite from the Development Authority using SPLOST money.

The City's approval is needed before the Development Authority will transfer the land and pay off the loan, but the City has refused to approve the agreement unless it gets \$10 million in SPLOST funds. The County has politely declined the City's demand and will not violate voters' trust.

If the City would have joined the County in approving the agreement last October, **\$258,000 of taxpayer dollars would have been saved.**

As we wait on the City, wasted interest is piling up. In the meantime, the Board of Commissioners continues to look for solutions.

>> SPLOST

SPLOST is a county levied sales tax authorized every five to six years by the voters for specific projects. You, the voters, authorized the current SPLOST project list.

City projects were included, but the City demanded that the County guarantee the City over \$13 million in SPLOST revenues. County Leadership declined, but did offer a counter proposal. The City declined. The County proceeded with the vote on SPLOST with city projects, including the Sibley-Smith Megasite, but no guaranteed SPLOST funds for the City. The voters overwhelmingly approved that SPLOST plan.

City Council members who were upset with the outcome sued the County and its Commissioners. After wasting resources of both governments, the City Council members lost in court and then appealed the Superior Court decision. Eventually they abandoned their lawsuit.

City leadership is again demanding \$10 million in guaranteed SPLOST money. The voters did not approve such an amount, but the City will not work with the County to pay off the Sibley-Smith Megasite loans unless the City gets \$10 Million in SPLOST. The city's actions are wrong and violate the trust and will of the voters.



Let's break down some of the issues Baldwin County Commissioners have had in working with the City of Milledgeville.

- >> THE LAW
- >> NEGOTIATION ATTEMPTS
- >> WATER SERVICE
- >> SIBLEY-SMITH MEGASITE
- >> SPLOST



>> THE LAW

**Service Delivery Strategy
Verification / Compliance / Due Dates**

Every 10 years, the State requires local governments to negotiate and agree on a service delivery strategy (SDS). The SDS must determine which local government will provide the different local services, where those services will be provided, and who will pay for those services. These decisions must be made by elected leaders from the City and County.

After three days of mediation, the County agreed to and created a special service district. This ensures that services provided to the unincorporated area are paid for by revenues from the unincorporated area and not property taxes paid by property owners in the City.

You can read the County's resolution at www.baldwincountygga.com.

This was not good enough for City leadership; so the City Council sued the County and its Commissioners. Also, the State has imposed sanctions on both governments. When local governments do not file an SDS agreement with the state, the state withholds state funding and permits; these are called sanctions.

Unfortunately for our taxpayers, the City's decision to sue rather than negotiate and compromise means our tax dollars will be spent on litigation rather than services.

>> ATTEMPTS AT NEGOTIATION

**SDS meetings with the
City of Milledgeville**

June 28, 2017

July 21, 2017

August 4, 2017

August 25, 2017

September 28, 2017

October 25, 2017

November 16, 2017

December 7, 2017

CANCELLED BY THE CITY

December 21, 2017

CANCELLED BY THE CITY

January 11, 2018

CANCELLED BY THE CITY

August 22, 2018

October 17, 2018

MEDIATION

November 20, 2018

MEDIATION

December 19, 2018

MEDIATION

>> WATER SERVICE

County leaders have asked the City to substantially reduce the water rates it charges unincorporated water customers. The City Leadership has refused.

- County citizens outside the City pay 60% more for water and sewer service than citizens in the City.
- They cannot vote for or against City politicians to change this policy.
- City will not change because it profits from water sales, sending about \$2 million dollars in water profits to its General Fund just last year.
- Over the last 10 years, the City used more than \$12 million in water profits to subsidize projects in the City.
- City has ignored requests for additional fire hydrants in these unincorporated areas, creating an extreme fire safety hazard.

To stop this modern form of taxation without representation, County leaders have asked to take over the City's water system outside the City. Not surprisingly, the City has refused.

The County has asked a judge to order the City to transfer its water distribution system in the unincorporated area to the County. (The Georgia Constitution prohibits cities from providing water service outside its boundaries unless it has a contract with the County. The City has refused the County's proposed contracts.)