

**CAMDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2002, 6:00 P.M.
WOODBINE, GEORGIA
REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING TO ADVERTISE MILLAGE
RATE FOR TAX YEAR 02**

A regular meeting of the Camden County Board of Commissioners and Public Hearing to advertise the millage rate for fiscal year 2003 was held Thursday, November 7, 2002, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room at the Courthouse in Woodbine, Georgia

Chairman Berry called the meeting to order.

Pastor Matthew Pettus, Jr., New Life Body of Christ Christian Church delivered the invocation.

Chairman Berry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Chairman Stephen L. Berry; Vice Chairman David L. Rainer; Commissioners Kenneth G. Hase; Preston Rhodes; County Attorney O. Brent Green; and Assistant County Administrator Bill Shanahan. Mr. E.B. Herrin was present as a commissioner-elect.

Appointment and Oath of Office for successor to fill vacant District 2 Commission Seat:

Motion by Mr. Rainer, seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted by Commissioners Rainer, Rhodes, Berry, and Hase, to appoint Mr. E. B. Herrin, Jr., for the unexpired term ending December 31, 2002, for District 2 (succeeding Robert G. Becker, who resigned).

Probate Judge Martin O. Gillette conducted the swearing in of Mr. Herrin.

PUBLIC HEARING: Millage Rate Tax Year 2002

Mr. Berry convened the final Public Hearing regarding the Tax Year 2002 Millage Rate at 6:07 p.m.

Mr. Sanford Feller, 103 Nelson Place, St. Marys, requested that the Board release several million dollars held in trust for the soon to expire SPLOST account for the rehabilitation of the old Courthouse as the taxpayers of Camden County need the relief more than the building does.

Ms. Agnes Tillerson, 244 Osprey Circle, St. Marys, said she opposed any increase in the County budget. Ms. Tillerson said the County residents needed tax relief and not tax increase due to the closing of the Durango Mill. She also said that an increase would not help the future economic growth of the County, as the current millage is the most likely reason that no new business of size has established itself here.

Ms. Tillerson then said that she felt that property appraisals should be planned for all land/homeowners on a routine basis. The lack of this is the reason that we now have to address this at the expense of the taxpayers. She said the Board needs to fund the JDA and ensure its members have the ability to direct state funding to the County. Ms. Tillerson finished by stating that she felt the County should only fund "basic human service needs."

Mr. Bob Becker, 208 Cypress Drive, Kingsland, said that it is sad that the homestead people will not have an increase in their taxes, while this looks very nice but the truth of the matter is that everybody in Camden County who owns a business, has rental property or military who own property will be paying higher taxes. In addition, we have no idea if the state homestead relief will still be in place next year. The Board had better look at this very hard as you may end up with a real problem next year.

Mr. George Scott, 1015 Greenwell Oak Drive, St. Marys, said he felt that County residents deserved a public statement from the Board concerning the reserve policy, when the Board will take steps to right-size expenditure versus revenue (at reasonable level), and publish the Capital Expenditures policy. In addition, the citizens deserve a long-term financial plan. Finally, he felt the citizens need to hear a statement of when the Board will fix all of the problems the County has with the budget.

Ms. Jane Winkler, 320 West William, Kingsland, said she was very concerned about the business taxes, as she has to pay taxes to both the City and County. She said she was concerned about the property taxes as she was trying to purchase the building where her business was located. She then said that while she does not mind paying school taxes, she does mind paying taxes for a 2003 Ford Crown Victory for the Assistant Fire Chief. She said that she and her husband do not own a new vehicle and could not understand why the Assistant Fire Chief needed one. She identified the Board's problem with the budget was spending and not tax increases. She felt that the County has not taken responsibility for giving direction to the budget. Ms. Winkler complained that the County was not a member of the Chamber of Commerce. (Mr. Berry advised her that it was against the law for the County to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce.) She wanted to know what is being done to stimulate economic diversity.

Mr. Berry closed the Public Hearing at 6:45 p.m.

PRESENTATION: No Presentations

AGENDA AMENDMENTS:

Motion by Mr. Hase, seconded by Mr. Rhodes, and voted unanimously to add New Business, item m. offering relief to the Durango employees in bankruptcy court by the County Attorney and New Business, item n. Proclamation: Retired Educators Day. Also, add the minutes for the October 29, 2002 called meeting for approval.

WORK SESSION: N/A

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- No Comments

1. Approval of Minutes for October 08, 15, and 29, 2002:

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes for October 8, 15, and 29, 2002, with the correction of the October 8 minutes to show Mr. Hase was absent.

2. Reports:

Mr. Shanahan reviewed the Board Calendar for November/December 2002.

Mr. Shanahan briefed the Board on the upcoming vacancies to the following boards:

- Mr. Dan A. Williams, Tax Assessors Board, December 31, 2002
- Dr. Ann Stoddard, County Planning Commission, December 31, 2002

Mr. Hase nominated Dr. Ann Stoddard to the County Planning Commission and asked that it be voted at the November 19, 2002 Commission meeting.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Resolution to adopt the final proposed budget cuts by department

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Rainer, and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution to adopt the final proposed budget cuts, \$1,170,800, by department. (As shown on list.)

b. Resolution to adopt the proposed Millage rate as advertised for FY 2003

A general discussion, with varying points of view, ensued. Mr. Green was asked if it was possible to take the \$2,000,000 (SPLOST Project) voted and approved by the Citizens of Camden County to rehabilitate the Old Courthouse and use it for the budget rather than raise the millage rate. Mr. Green said he thought it is not legal but that he would need to read the statute before he gave a professional opinion.

Motion by Mr. Hase, seconded by Mr. Rainer, and voted to call the question.

So Voted 2 – 3, Motion Failed

Mr. Berry – Nay
Mr. Rhodes – Nay
Mr. Hase – Yea
Mr. Herrin – Nay
Mr. Rainer – Yea

The discussion continued. Mr. Berry said that one time fixes do not fix the problem, they just postpone it. In addition, he said that the problem with the budget is the County digest and until it is taken care of, the millage will continue to be high.

Mr. Rainer said he felt the one time fix would actually give the Board time to fix its budget problems.

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Berry, and voted to set the millage rates as proposed in the package as Old Business, Tab b.

So Voted 3 – 2

Mr. Berry – Yea
Mr. Rhodes – Yea
Mr. Hase – Nay
Mr. Herrin – Yea
Mr. Rainer – Nay

c. Employee Assistance Program

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Hase, and voted to approve the low bid by Occupational Health Consultants of America (OHCA), for \$7,320, for the Employee Assistant Program.

d. Kingsland Water Line Extension

Tabled to the November 19, 2002, Commission meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Interest and penalty refund for Edison Chouest Offshore

No action taken.

b. Amend contract for Probation Supervision and Rehabilitation Services with Satilla Probation Management Corporation

Motion by Mr. Rainer, seconded by Mr. Hase, and voted unanimously to amend the contract for Probation Supervision and Rehabilitation Services with Satilla Probation Management Corporation.

c. Contract for purchase of services for Juvenile Offenders

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Hase, and voted unanimously to approve the contract for purchase of services for juvenile offenders.

d. Budget Adjustment for FY 2003, Increase Health Insurance Premiums

Motion by Mr. Rainer, seconded by Mr. Hase, and voted unanimously to approve the budget adjustments for the FY 2003, Increase Health Insurance Premiums.

e. Contract for the St. Marys Tourism Council

No action taken.

f. Resolution to adopt expensing allocated grants received from the state.

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to approve the resolution to adopt expensing allocated grants received from the state.

g. Approval of changes to the Camden County Health Plan

Motion by Mr. Herrin, seconded by Mr. Hase, and voted unanimously to approve the changes to the Camden County Health Plan as showed in New Business, item g., of the agenda.

h. Equipment Purchase: 2003 Ford, Crown Victoria for Assistant Fire Chief (replacement vehicle)

Request withdrawn by Danny Daniels, Fire Chief.

i. Surplus Equipment, Road Department 1993, F150, Ford Pickup – 1FTDF1YXPNA97516

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Hase, and voted unanimously to approve the surplus of the 1993, F150, Ford Pickup assigned to the Road Department.

j. Flea Hill Water System

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to approve the following:

- Allow the County to charge the Flea Hill Community for water services; (upon completion of the ordinance)
- Send application for a GEFA Loan for \$148,554;
- Send application for a DCA Immediate Threat and Danger Grant for \$50,000; and
- Send a plan of corrective action to EPD by November 14, 2002.

k. Proposed Fee Structure for Permits

Motion postponed until the November 19, 2002, Commission meeting.

l. Board of Registrars Per Diem for Office Work

Tabled until the November 19, 2002 Commission meeting to give the County Attorney time to review State Law.

m. Offering relief to the Durango employees in bankruptcy court by the County Attorney

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to direct the County Attorney to assist the laid-off Durango employees, at county expense, in pursuing

legal action to ensure these employees will receive all salary, leave, and severance if Durango does not pay as obligated or the Unions do not pay the cost of litigation.

n. Proclamation: Retired Educators Day

Motioned by Mr. Rainer, seconded by Mr. Rhodes and voted unanimously to approve the Proclamation designating November 17, 2002, as Georgia Retired Educators Day.

o. Recess: (7:25 p.m.)

Mr. Rainer introduced the new Library Manager, Mr. Roderick Lee, to the Board.

Motion by Mr. Rhodes, seconded by Mr. Herrin, and voted unanimously to recess the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen L. Berry
Chairman

Bill Shanahan
Assistant County Administrator