

The Budget Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Wednesday, April 9, 2008, at 5:30 p.m., in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers, Oconee County Courthouse.

Members Present:

Chairman Melvin Davis
Commissioner Jim Luke
Commissioner Donald H. Norris
Commissioner Margaret S. Hale
Commissioner Chuck Horton

Staff Present:

Administrative Officer Alan Theriault
County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey
Finance Director Jeff Benko

Media Present:

Vinnie Williams, The Oconee Enterprise
Adam Thompson, Athens Banner-Herald

Utility Department: Utility Director John Hatcher presented the FY2009 budget request for the Utility Department. Mr. Hatcher projected a 9% decrease in the budget due to lower water and sewer sales and capacity fees. He said water usage has remained steady since January and he expects customers will continue to conserve water.

Mr. Hatcher reported he was considering a meter replacement program to install radio frequency equipped meters. He said the replacement program would reduce meter reading costs by eliminating the need to contract for meter reading services.

Public Works: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the FY2009 requests for unfunded expenditures for Public Works. Requests for FY2009 included the addition of a Chip Sealing Program, the purchase of a mini-excavator and the replacement of a John Deere backhoe and 2 single-axle dump trucks. Mr. Beshara also included funds to increase the gravel road treatment program to 2 applications of calcium chloride per year.

Solid Waste: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the budget request for Solid Waste for FY2009. Mr. Beshara noted the budget request was reduced by 2%. He reported he is researching the feasibility of the county selling its recyclables, rather than contracting for the hauling and disposal.

Mr. Beshara proposed an increase in Landfill Tipping Fees and Blue Bags.

Stormwater Management: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the budget request for Stormwater Management for FY2009, noting a reduction of \$5,000.

Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the budget request for the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission for FY2009, noting a reduction of \$2,000.

Transportation Improvement & Maintenance Plan (TIM): Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the proposed Transportation Improvement & Maintenance Plan for Roads and Bridges for FY2009 and FY2010. Elements of the TIM Plan include:

Element 01 - repair and resurfacing of 40 miles of existing paved roads under County Programs;

Element 02 - repair and resurfacing of an additional 4 miles of existing paved roads under the GDOT LARP Program;

Element 03 - complete maintenance minimization projects on 1.5 miles of existing gravel/dirt roads;

Element 04 – repair or replacement of five (5) bridge structures;

Element 05 - improvements, widening and/or signalization at two (2) intersections; and,

Element 06 - various aspects of the three major transportation system projects – GA Hwy. 53/Mars Hill Road Widening, Jennings Mill Parkway Extension and Butlers Crossing Sidewalks.

Mr. Beshara noted the TIM Plan projects are in addition to and compliment the daily operations of the Road Department in the maintenance of the County Road System. Funding sources for the plan elements are Capital Improvement Program Funds, SPLOST Funds and GDOT/FHWA Funding for Major Transportation Upgrades.

Law Enforcement: Sheriff Scott Berry presented the FY2009 requests for unfunded expenditures for Law Enforcement. Personnel requests included a Department Training Officer position, an Investigator position and a CHAMPS Officer position. Sheriff Berry requested five (5) deputy vehicles, an Expedition-type vehicle with emergency equipment and twenty (20) video camera systems for the current vehicle fleet.

Jail: Sheriff Scott Berry presented the FY2009 requests for unfunded expenditures for the Jail. He requested five new Jailer positions, an Assistant Administrator position and three Court Service Deputy positions.

E-911: Sheriff Scott Berry and Captain Jimmy Williams presented the FY2009 requests for unfunded expenditures for E-911. Captain Williams requested an additional Communications Officer position.

Finance: Finance Director Jeff Benko presented the FY2009 requests for unfunded expenditures for the Finance Department. Mr. Benko requested grade reclassifications for the Assistant Finance Director position and the Budget Officer position.

Chairman Davis asked the Board members to share their opinions on any policy decisions or particular budget items they would like to see deleted or included in the FY2009 budget.

The Finance Department will provide the Commissioners with summaries of the requested positions, requested capital expenditures, total expected revenues and total expenditures requested by department. The departmental financial statements through the 3rd quarter will also be provided.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

County Clerk

Chairman

Date