

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**CALLED SESSION - PUBLIC HEARING II**  
August 13, 2019  
6:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, J. Harry Lange, Andrew Zuerner. Commissioner Absent: Rob Grant. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Langston called the Called Session to order.
2. **PUBLIC HEARING II: NOTICE OF INTENT TO INCREASE PROPERTY TAXES.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order and said that the purpose of this meeting is regarding the notice of intent to increase property taxes and that this is the second of three Public Hearing regarding same before the millage rate is set, and that the third will take place during the August 20 regular session. She said the Public Hearings are required by law, and were appropriately advertised; that individuals will have five (5) minutes to speak; and that Commissioner Zuerner will act as time keeper. She then asked Randy Dowling, County Manager, for his comments.

Randy Dowling, County Manager, reiterated that this is the second of three State required public hearings, with the third being held during the August 20 meeting of the Commissioners, after which the millage rate for 2019 will be set; and that the School Board has set its millage rate at 17.26. He explained that with the approved budget having been balanced using funds from the General Fund reserve and from Solid Waste, continued reliance of those funds is not good practice; that an increase is needed for several reasons, to include salary study and increase for employees, updating land codes, clean-up and development of Ellerslie Park; that the current tax rate is 8.63 mills and the proposed rate is 9.38 mills, a .75 tax rate increase; that since the Board of Education has reduced its millage by 1.3 mills and the County is proposing a .75 mill increased, overall, property taxes will be less than last year.

Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to comment on the proposed millage rate increase of .75 mills.

Ron Saxon, citizen who lives on Rosewood Drive, appeared before the Board and said he doesn't understand the increase if the budget has already approved. Chairman Langston explained the while the budget has been approved, the millage rate has not. Mr. Saxon said that many senior citizens are on fixed incomes and cannot afford an increase in taxes.

Joe Burris, citizen who lives on Happy Hollow Road, appeared before the Board and said that he was concerned about the costs associated with The Grove, to which Chairman Langston said that there is a binding contract with the Grove as to what will or will not be provided to the County, which was entered into in 2014.

Henry Aderhold, citizen who lives on Holland Road, appeared before the Board and said there are many senior citizens that live in the County who are on fixed incomes, and the Board should take that into consideration and find another way regarding funding.

Marvin Willingham, citizen who lives on Big Sky Drive, appeared before the Board and said that there has been a lot of growth on Big Sky Drive during the last two years; that with the number of subdivisions being built, there should be enough revenue from taxes coming in; that it is hard for retirees, on a fixed income, to come up with increased taxes; and that taxpayers should not have to pay for the costs associated with Melody Lakes Dam. Chairman Langston said that the State has determined the County owns the dam since it owns the road across the dam and is responsible for the maintenance of same. Mr. Willingham also said that senior citizens should be given a break on taxes if they don't have children in the school system, to which Chairman Langston advised that would have to be taken up by the School Board.

Angela Dennis, citizen who lives on West Bon Acre Road, appeared before the Board and said that she is opposed to the tax increase.

Connie Hiatt, citizen who lives on Grizzly Lane, appeared before the Board and said she understands that from 2002 to 2017, there was no millage rate increase and would like to know why such didn't happen. Chairman Langston said that she would be happy to discuss same following the hearing.

There being no further comments, Chairman Langston closed the Public Hearing, thanked everyone for their comments.

3. **ADJOURNMENT.** Chairman Langston adjourned the meeting and reminded everyone that the next Public Hearing will be held during the August 20 meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

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Becky Langston, Chairman

Attest:

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Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk