

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CALLED WORK SESSION**

Conference Room, Commissioners' Office
104 North College Street, Hamilton, GA 31811

Monday, July 11, 2022
4:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Andrew Zuerner (arrived 4:45 p.m.), Rob Grant, Becky Langston, Bobby Irions, Susan Andrews (arrived 4:56 p.m.). Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk; Clint Chastain, Chief Financial Officer; Wayne Morris, Chief Appraiser; Vickie Jamerson, Tax Commissioner; Wanda Bates, Deputy Tax Commissioner.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Vice-Chairman Grant called the Called Work Session to order and said that the first point of discussion was the millage rate.
2. **MILLAGE RATE.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, advised that staff was recommending that the millage rate remain the same at 9.38. He informed the Board that based on the Board of Education's meeting schedule, the County is tentatively scheduling the required advertisements and three required public hearings. Discussion was held that included that staff would not want to rollback the millage rate and have to raise it again later; that the millage rate could be lowered and still have some cushion; that the rate could go back but not to the rollback; that a consistent rate is better than one that is fluctuating; that there is a desire to give back to taxpayers; that any help to the taxpayers would be appreciated; that the County operates a lot of services from the millage rate; that West Point's millage rate is 60% of the County's millage rate; that the current collection rate is approximately a 96%-97%; that the Board could reduce it to whatever they would like; and that the hearings would be held for any rate over the rollback rate. The consensus was to set the millage rate at 9.13.
3. **RE-NEGOTIATIONS OF LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (LOST).** Randy Dowling, County Manager, provided an overview of the purpose of the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), what occurs if there isn't an agreement by December 31st, and the meetings that have occurred thus far. Discussion was held that included that it is important to work together and negotiate a fair percentage for the cities and the county; that they went to mediation in October of 2012 during the last negotiation; that three cities don't appear to want to negotiate and want 40%; that the funds received are not project specific and are based on just a percentage; that we are all one county; that the County was informed that three cities have advised that they were not going to attend the next scheduled meeting on Thursday; that all parties should show up to negotiate in good faith; that two cities (West Point and Waverly Hall) were not previously included in conversations with the other three (Hamilton, Pine Mountain and Shiloh); that it is expected that West Point and Waverly Hall will attend the meeting on Thursday; that it is disheartening that some cities won't come to the table; and that the County's counter to the cities will be the same percentages as are currently in place.
4. **ADJOURNMENT.** The work session adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Andrew Zuerner, Chairman

Attest:

Andrea R. Dzioba, County Clerk