

2010 Budget Meeting #12
Hidden Hills Community Association
Berean Church
2201 Young Road, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30088

Questions/Comments:

Questioner # 1 Robert Blackmon

Explain the hiring of an Inspector General which will increase the County's budget.

Response from the CEO: That was a recommendation that was presented by the Board of Transparency & Accountability to insure we were implementing cost savings, eliminating waste, fraud and abuse and we can do it without adding to the budget. If we don't it will cost us dollars. There have been other concerns about can we do more to eliminate waste. Many local governments and colleges and Universities do this. Also, we are transferring people from other departments that saves us from downsizing.

Questioner # 2 Lloyd Alaman

Mr. Alaman's question was in the area of Senior Citizens. Mr. Alaman is a member of Lou Walker Center. Mr. Alaman asked if Human Services' cuts will affect the seniors and how much?

Response from the CEO: Not sure where we are with that. Let me tell you why. We're trying to balance the budget. We need to get a budget passed by March 1st. One of the objectives from the Commission is that we either have no millage increase or that we get as close to reducing the millage increase as we possibly can. We're protecting any cuts (makes up 5% of the budget) from sworn Officers, Police, Fire and Sheriff and I've been hearing that the initial budget had too deep of an impact on our courts. If we are going to protect those areas and try to get rid of this 1.86 increase where is the pain going to be felt – who's going to feel it? It's going to fall a little bit on some of our other areas that deliver services to our citizens.

Response from Dr. Simama: I don't know the full impact yet. We are going to consolidate, if approved, Human Services and Community Development. I think there will be a net lost of 9 positions; some are unfilled positions. Directors are coming up with a plan that will have a minimal impact. There will be some impact but it will not impact or affect services where the end user will notice any deterioration of services.

Response from the CEO: There comes a point where you can't cut Human capital and cut back without seeing a reduction. If you want those services kept let me and commissioners hear. I don't want to mislead anybody and set us up for failure either. Your priorities, are our priorities in DeKalb County Government. You can't have your

cake and eat it too. Largely 55% of these other areas are going to be hit and will be felt if we don't have millage increase.

Questioner # 3: Suggest how you will start with a MBO, have your people do it next year so we won't have this kind of problem. Customer service training the way you explained it is Re-training employees. Why can't your Managers do that? That should be their job and you don't have to spend \$375,000.00 to retrain your staff. Then the office of The Inspector General. How much will it cost? I assume it would cost approx. \$700,000.00 or more. Why can't you take your fraud division or part of your Finance Department and revamp their to work in that Inspector General's office?

Response from the CEO: I think we are managing by objectives. We are setting priorities putting together this budget. We are working toward a Revenue Enhancement Commission.

Questioner # 3 (con't): Two other points – only 2 meetings on internet. Citizens need to realize that the BOC has done more work this year than in the past on this budget. Increase revenue...do more work. Code Enforcement is running absentee landlords. Change the ordinance to reflect a fine immediately on a warning and graduated increases on properties that don't respond to violations and citations. This would gain money and cut down on code enforcement, having to write property citations. Lou Walker, \$60.00/year...\$50/class? \$40,000.00 was given to Commissioner Sutton where the Board of Education could have picked up.

Response from the CEO: Commission's funding - I didn't propose that in my budget that was added by the commission in 2009 when they took action on the budget and that's how that program got in.

Questioner # 4: Judge Barbara Mobley

Please help support the message that we are sending to the CEO and the Commissioners. It's not that we disagree with the cuts. Public Safety is not just the jail and Sheriffs department. State law requires persons arrested to have a first appearance hearing within 72 hours. We may not have enough Magistrate Judges to hold those first appearances, particularly for victims of domestic violence. What are we saying to victims of domestic violence – that we don't care? We are concerned that Public Defenders will not be available. What are we saying to persons locked up? If the budget cuts say we don't have enough Magistrate Judges there will be no hearings and people will be released. We are losing our court reporters.

Response from the CEO: We have been working to restore money to domestic violence. There's a real cost if we don't give what the Courts are asking for.

Questioner # 5 59.9% of the county's revenue comes from property taxes. Are there alternate ways to fund this budget? Where are the real leaders and real thought people are out there somewhere. Senior citizens will be unable to pay those taxes. There has to be some other way to augment this budget rather than relying on homeowners to carry this burden. Increase fees and fines and some other areas.

Response from the CEO: 60% comes from residential and commercial property. HOST credit goes to residential homeowners, not commercial businesses. The BOC has adopted rates and fees that are compatible of with other jurisdictions. We will be working with BOC on a Revenue Enhancement Commission. Changes in fees is another thing we will do, water and sewer, etc. adjusted. We should be looking at ways to do more. We will be looking at Revenue 2011 and other revenue sources.

Questioner # 5

Moral obligation and the Constitutional Rights of us as a people. Reflect morality and ethnics in this budget.

Questioner # 7 Jan Costella – Save money – Cut down on the number of trash, recycling, etc. collections.

Response from the CEO Let me know how you feel. Staff is doing a report on how much we can save.

Questioner # 7 (Con't) Jan Costella

Code Enforcement – when they break the law make them pay a fine. What will be done to encourage people to invest in our County? Make businesses and people want to invest in DeKalb County.