

After Agenda

Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Work Session
Saturday, April 30, 2022
4:00 PM
Savannah Conference Center

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Saturday, April 30, 2022 at the Savannah Conference Center beginning at 4:00 p.m. with Chairman Clay Davis presiding. Commissioners James Dutton, Rita Johnson, Ryan Bowlden and Gwen Flowers-Taylor were present for the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Dr. Steve Ledbetter, and County Clerk, Kathy Gibson to record the minutes.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER) by Chairman Clay Davis.

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONES AND ALL OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was delivered by Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor, District #1.

III. PLEDGE TO FLAG

The Pledge to the Flag was led by Commissioner Ryan Bowlden, District #4.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

1. The Board of Commissioners have asked for an opportunity to discuss a possible Stormwater Utility for Spalding County.

Dr. Ledbetter led the discussion regarding the need for a Stormwater Utility and discussed areas in the County that need to be addressed due to current problems involving storm water.

Consensus of the Board was to allow staff to go forward with exploring possibilities for implementing a storm water procedure for future development or a possible storm water utility.

2. Discussion regarding budget and taxes.

This discussion centered around any questions the Board of Commissioners might still have regarding the budget and additional items that have been requested since the individual budget review with each Commissioner. Dr. Ledbetter asked for feedback on what the Board thought as we are getting ready for public hearings.

Commissioner Dutton stated that there is one more thing that is needed. He didn't know it at the time he reviewed the budget, but Judge Thacker and Judge Esary have asked for a part time administrative person for the Alternative/Veteran's Court.

Chairman Davis then stated that we are only talking about maybe \$15,000 so this is small money in the scope of the total budget.

Commissioner Dutton then advised that we have approximately 20 participants right now, if we get to 25 or 28 participants, the grant will automatically expand to cover the cost of a part time person. Our current full-time employee is at capacity, so with a part time person, we will get to the level that the State grant kicks in.

The Board asked for additional information on the Alternative Court and how the funding works. Bring it back to us and if it has a significant impact on the total budget, we need to know that.

Commissioner Johnson then stated that there has been some discussion regarding the health insurance, this is a significant amount when it comes to the budget, and she asked if there is an update on this?

Dr. Ledbetter advised that the initial quote came in at a 51% increase. Negotiations between Miles Neville and Anthem returned a 35% increase. We then asked MSI to bid the program. Cigna responded and if we match “apples to apples” they only had an 18% increase. It is a partially self-insured program with a stop gap, and it has a laser for one case that has the potential to be a very high dollar case. The total difference is \$1.9 million between the Cigna program and the Anthem program. If we go with Cigna, we will spend \$1.9 million less than if we remain with Anthem.

With the Cigna program the deductible will go from \$4,500 per employee down to \$1,500. Currently, we have a \$4,500 deductible and we have an HRA where the County pays \$3,000 towards the \$4,500 deductible. With the Cigna program we won't have to pay that anymore so the bill for the HRA goes away. These costs were approximately \$250,000 annually. Cigna is also offering \$50,000 for a wellness program, and this can go towards Fitbits or whatever we decide to use it for.

Mr. Neville did a complete and thorough review of this program and initially he was really happy with the program that we have, but when he completed the review, he advised that making this change would be the right thing to do.

Dr. Ledbetter also advised that when we requested all of the data that would be needed to put the item out to bid, Anthem refused to provide us with that information. Making the transition over to Cigna will afford us the opportunity to have data readily available for when we re-shop the program next year. That is a part of the contract now.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then stated that her concern is that as a self insurer, we are opening ourselves up to a lot more debt.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that working through a self-insured program would be a stopgap. We would buy in with a reduced rate with a guaranty that we would have a stopgap, so we wouldn't go over a certain dollar figure. It is a mid-

coverage position. We have the one case that is potentially going to cost a half million dollars sitting out to the side. That is called a laser program because they laser the cases that they don't want to insure out of the pool so that the pool takes on a lower risk for the insurance company.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked about the people who would be lasered out.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that under the program they have the same medical coverage, it is just if that one case goes up to its maximum of a half million dollars that they think it could possibly hit then we would pay the half million for that one case. This is still saving the County \$1.9 million up front. So, instead of us saving the full \$1.9 million, if the transplant occurs, it saves us \$1.4 million. Everybody is covered, everybody has insurance, and we are saving at least \$1.4 million and potentially \$1.9 million between the plan that we have today and Cigna. Staffs' recommendation is that we go to Cigna.

The Board then took a recess to relocate the meeting to another location.

Chairman Davis then asked if the current budget numbers that were given to the Board regarding the health insurance will be enough to cover this plan?

Dr. Ledbetter advised that "yes the numbers given will accommodate the plan as presented."

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked how much fund balance will be used for this budget.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that the proposed budget as presented will use approximately \$7.8 million of fund balance. He doesn't feel we will use it; we had balanced the budget for this fiscal year with \$4 million of fund balance and it appears that we will come in far less than that. In fact, at last count it looks like it will be a little less than \$1 million of fund balance used.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor asked what the largest thing that increased the budget?

Dr. Ledbetter then clarified that her question was what is the largest impact on the budget? The answer would be payroll. This was because of the mid-year raises.

Chairman Davis then asked about the pension plan as we were behind and needed to catch up.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that we are doing a little over the recommended this year in order to catch up with where we need to be sooner.

Chairman Davis stated that he wanted to continue to step forward with allocating funding for roads in all future budgets. Last year we allocated

\$900,000 for roads, this year it has increased to \$1.3 million.

Commissioner Dutton then stated that we are resurfacing more roads this year than we have ever resurfaced in the history of Spalding County.

Dr. Ledbetter stated 34 miles.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked about the Commissioners Contingency Fund.

After much discussion, Dr. Ledbetter asked if he could come up with \$25,000 in Commissioners Contingency for each commissioner.

Chairman Davis then stated that he is not big on a tax increase.

Commissioner Johnson stated that budget goes in line with the taxes, so we need to know what the tax digest is going to look like before we can talk about a tax increase.

Dr. Ledbetter stated that he just wanted to have the conversation, because we are still waiting on the tax digest. Jerry Johnson is actually running those numbers for us right now. He then stated that we may keep the tax rate exactly the same as we did last year because we can't lower it and that would mean that any additional funding that may come in, instead of adding any additional projects, we will need to reduce the fund balance should that number be in excess.

Chairman Davis then reminded everyone that we will have the rollback issue again this year.

Commissioner Dutton then stated that we are going to be forced to say no to the rollback because we took the money from the Biden Administration for ARPA and so we cannot rollback taxes again this year.

3. Consider discussion on updating the Spalding County Zoning Ordinances.

Dr. Ledbetter advised that Municode is the company we subscribe to that houses all of our ordinances and zoning ordinances online. They are also a national law firm that houses ordinances across the country, and they continually review all of those ordinances. They have worked with many jurisdictions across the State of Georgia and the entire country to update their ordinances to keep them in line with where they need to be. Brad Vaughn asked them to provide us with a quote on how much they would charge us to do a complete re-write of all of our zoning ordinances for Spalding County.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated if you look at the zoning ordinances you will see ordinances dating back to 1995. We have not done a full re-write in a number of years. Municode and Civic Plus recommend best practices are to update the ordinances every 10 years. We have not done that. The quote that came in to perform this work is \$34,000, which is very inexpensive.

Dr. Ledbetter then stated that he is recommending the Board approve the \$34,000 expense and to start the review and upgrade as soon as possible. He also asked that the Board be active participants in this update. We are going to be asked to review their documents and make comments on the changes.

V. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion/Second by Johnson/Dutton to adjourn the meeting at 5:34 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously by all.***