

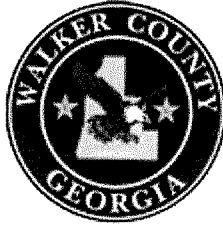
AGENDA
WALKER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WALKER COUNTY CIVIC CENTER, 10052 HWY 27
ROCK SPRING, GEORGIA 30739

The following constitutes the agenda for the fiscal year 2025 budget work session of the Board of Commissioners of Walker County, Georgia to be held at 9:00 a.m. on June 3, 2024

FY2025 BUDGET WORK SESSION

- Invocation & Pledges
- Chairman Whitfield will Call the Work Session Order
- Establish a Quorum is present
- Presentations:
 - 9:00 a.m. - Tax Commissioner's Office (Carolyn Walker)
 - 9:20 a.m. - District Attorney's Office (Kevin Baugh)
 - 9:40 a.m. - Animal Services (Bailey Clements / Emily Sadler)
 - 10:00 a.m. - Public Defender's Office (Jad Johnson)
 - 10:20 a.m. - Coroner (Billy Sims)
 - 10:40 a.m. - Assessors Office (Terry Gilreath)
 - 11:00 a.m. - Magistrate Court (Cindy Hollingsworth)
 - 11:20 a.m. - Probate Court (Judge Christy Anderson)
 - 11:40 a.m. - Planning & Inspections (Jon Pursley)
 - 12:00 p.m. - Recess
 - 1:00 p.m. - Elections & Registration (Danielle Montgomery)
 - 1:20 p.m. - Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Steve Wilson)
 - 1:40 p.m. - Landfill (Paine Gily)
 - 2:00 p.m. - Mountain Cove Farms (Jenna Stevens)
 - 2:20 p.m. - Fleet & Equipment Maintenance (Rick Carr)
 - 2:40 p.m. - Public Library (Lecia Eubanks)
 - 3:00 p.m. - Public Works (Carlen Bowers)
 - 3:20 p.m. - EMA/911 (Blake Hodge)
 - 3:40 p.m. - Fire Rescue (Blake Hodge)
 - 4:00 p.m. - Ag Extension (Jennifer Meeks)
 - 4:20 p.m. - Facilities (Todd Bird)
- Adjourn

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:
Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at Courthouse Annex III, 201 Main Street, LaFayette, GA



**Walker County Governmental Authority
101 South Duke Street, P.O. Box 445
LaFayette, GA 30728
706-638-1437**

**Minutes of the FY2025 Budget Work Session
June 3, 2024 - 9:00 PM**

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Shannon Whitfield called to order the FY2025 Budget Work Session held at Walker County Civic Center, 10052 Hwy 27, Rock Spring, Georgia at 9:00 AM on June 3, 2024.

II. Attendees:

The following were present: Chairman Whitfield, Commissioner Robert Blakemore, Commissioner Mark Askew, Commissioner Brian Hart, Commissioner Robert Stultz, Legal and Policy Director David Gottlieb, Public Relations Director Joe Legge, Communications Specialist Dakiya Porter and Board Clerk Whitney Summey. Other guests signed in at the meeting as well. Please see the attached sign in sheet.

III. Presentations:

I. Tax Commissioner's Office:

1. Carolyn Walker requested a 4% increase in salaries for cost of living raises and to add an additional employee. She said they also need to enhance security, specifically adding two security cameras at the Fairview office.

II. District Attorney's Office:

1. Kevin Baugh said their office is funded by the four counties in the circuit and Walker County is 38% of the total budget. He said they are short staffed and explained some of the competitive salaries in the area affecting it. He said the state has given a 4% salary increase and they try to stay equivalent. He said the VOCA grant has been cut substantially which has hurt their budget. He said 90-95% of the budget increase will go to personnel. He said if all of the open positions are not filled and the salaries are not used, the state will reimburse the county at the end of the year. Commissioner Hart asked if the 4.3% salary increase was included in the total asking budget. Kevin Baugh said yes.

IV. Recess:

1. The Board took a recess at 9:17 AM. The meeting resumed at 9:32 AM.

V. Presentations (Continued):

I. Animal Services:

1. Emily Sadler asked for a slight increase in their budget. She said there are multiple factors such as overtime due to animal control after hours emergency calls; cleaning and disposal increases at the landfill; energy, water and sewerage increases due to cleaning. Commissioner Hart asked if staff raises were included in the proposed budget. Emily Sadler said cost of living raises were included.

II. Public Defender's Office:

1. Jad Johnson said they are funded by the four counties they service and the state. He said they are four attorneys short and any funds not used are reimbursed to the counties at the end of the year. He said they have requested a small increase in their budget for personnel raises. Commissioner Hart asked if attorneys live and work in the same county. Jad Johnson said they all travel to each county serviced by their office. Commissioner Askew asked for an estimated percentage of the increase. Jad Johnson said it was around a \$23,000.00 increase.

III. Coroner:

1. Billy Sims said there is an increase in his budget request for salaries. He wants his salary to increase to \$60,000.00 from \$34,000.00. He said he is asking for his Chief Deputy Coroner's salary to increase to \$30,000.00 per year. He is also asking for the deputies' call rates to increase to \$250.00 from \$200.00. He said the cremation rate is also increasing which will affect the indigent care costs. Chairman Whitfield asked if the deputies get paid by call and if they received a raise in 2024. Billy Sims said they do get paid by call and the increase in 2024 was from \$175.00 to \$200.00. He said he has decreased spending by only using third parties for Atlanta trips twice since January.

IV. Assessor's Office:

1. Terry Gilreath said the biggest change in his budget request is for an additional employee. He said there is an increase in travel and general line items for training. He

said the prices for classes have increased and it is harder to get into the online classes, so they will have to travel to attend in person classes. Commissioner Hart asked if the salary difference included raises. Terry Gilreath said yes.

VI. Recess:

- I. The Board took a recess at 10:09 AM. The meeting resumed at 10:21 AM.

VII. Presentations (Continued):

I. Magistrate Court:

1. Cindy Hollingsworth said salaries are the main change because of new judges and cost of living raises. She said some of their computer services are increasing from their vendors as well. She added that interpreters are needed more than usual and they may ask for more money for them in the future.

II. Planning & Inspections:

1. Jon Pursley said there is a 5% increase in the total budget. He gave a breakdown of the 2024 and 2025 budget differences.

III. Facilities:

1. Todd Bird said there is a 9.21% increase in his budget proposal. He said the main thing they are needing is an additional employee with plumbing experience. He gave details of some of the big projects they are working on and the costs, including remediation of the Coats American building in Rossville.

VIII. Recess:

- I. The Board took a recess at 10:36 AM. The meeting resumed at 10:53 AM.

IX. Presentations (Continued):

I. Probate Court:

1. Christy Anderson said salaries are the main change. She said they want to add an additional full time employee. She said class fees are also increasing. She also asked if the chief clerk could serve as a part time judge to help with guardianship and probate. She said this will help save time. Chairman Whitfield said she needed to submit a request in writing and the Board can see if it is within statute.

II. Elections & Registration:

1. Danielle Montgomery said they have an increase in salaries and postage. She said shipment of machines is not covered in the warranties and the new Rossville location will add additional postage costs. She said the cellular data costs are also increasing and it is how the poll pads are operated at each voting site. She said they also need four new scanners in the office per the state's recommendations. Chairman Whitfield asked her to provide the Board with information on the requested scanners.

X. Recess:

- I. The Board took a recess at 11:11 AM. The meeting resumed at 1:00 PM.

XI. Presentations(Continued):

I. Sheriff's Office:

1. Steve Wilson said salaries and benefits are their main increases. He said vehicle repairs are also seeing a big increase due to rising cost of accident repairs and maintenance. He said the jail is expected to see increases in dental, prescription, and food cost. He said they are also needing roof repairs. Chairman Whitfield asked about ammo and training ammo increases being two separate line items. Steve Wilson said they have always been separate and he will look into the admin and training differences.

II. Landfill:

1. Paine Gily gave a broad overview of the landfill. He said volume is up but it is not where it needs to be so it affects their revenue streams. He said they are asking for a 14% increase for additional labor, five groundwater wells, technical services, equipment repair costs, and post closure costs. Commissioner Hart asked about the five groundwater wells. Paine Gily said they will cost \$80.00 to \$100.00 per foot to dig. Chairman Whitfield asked where the additional \$400,000.00 in revenue was coming from. Paine Gily said republic waste has already announced an increase in their rates, so the landfills rates will also increase to offset the difference. Chairman Whitfield asked what the MSW rate is projected to be. Paine Gily said \$56.50 which is a 6% increase. Commissioner Askew said getting bigger customers could help offset some of the costs.

III. Mountain Cove Farms:

1. Jenna Stevens said their main budget is payroll and utilities. She said they are asking for additional funding for facility improvements. She provided the Board with a handout and gave a detailed overview of the state of the buildings and how repairs could help bring in additional guests and revenue. She also compared the current rates to rates they could have with the requested improvements.

IV. Fleet & Equipment Maintenance:

1. Rick Carr said salary and COLA raises are their main request. He said they need to hire an additional mechanic and fabricator for the current open position. He said they are having to contract out big jobs because they do not have a fabricator.

V. Public Library:

1. Lecia Eubanks said they have six funding agencies and three different fiscal years. She said they are asking for \$36,000.00 additional funding for wages and benefits.

VI. Public Works:

1. Carlen Bowers said they are asking for a 4-5% increase in salaries. He gave details of the additional increases such as material inflation, equipment upgrades, capital outlay projects, bridge and box culvert repairs, and additional vehicle purchases. Commissioner Stultz asked about the \$60,000.00 increase under snow and ice. Carlen Bowers explained that the current plows and sanders are not compatible with the new trucks. Commissioner Hart asked if the 24% increase would include COLA raises and additional employees. Carlen Bowers said yes and it will cover five additional employees.

VII. EMA/911:

1. Blake Hodge provided the Board with a detailed proposal with multiple options for the budget. He said they are asking for \$80,000.00 to finish the inside of the 911 center. He said night shift employees are a challenge to keep so they are requesting a \$2.00 per hour increase in their salary. Commissioner Stultz asked how many employees are on night shift. Blake Hodge said they have five positions but are well under staffed. He said they keep three minimum employees on the night shift and have three openings. He said this causes them to have additional overtime expenses. He said there is also an operations manager position open. They would like to take out that position and add a 911/EMA assistant director to better serve the EMA for the county.

VIII. Fire Rescue:

1. Blake Hodge provided the Board with a detailed proposal with three options for pay increases and additional employees. He said adding additional personnel would help with the county's ISO rating. He said they have a huge need for a diesel mechanic that is a certified emergency vehicle technician. He said this would save time and money for vehicle repairs. He said the current burn building needs to be replaced and gave details on the proposal in the handout. He said the new command vehicle requests are part of the replacement program that was started a few years ago. Commissioner Askew asked if the burn building would go in the same place as the current one. Blake Hodge said it will go to a new location where there is already an existing concrete pad.

IX. Ag Extension:

1. Jennifer Meeks gave an overview of the services they provide. She said they have a very simple budget and only have one item change to the 4H program assistants salary.

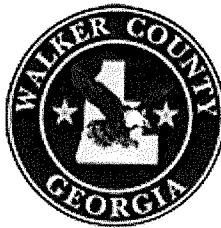
XII. Adjournment:

- I. Chairman Whitfield thanked everyone for their presentations. He said the requests are six-million dollars over funding levels and the Board will work very hard on getting a budget finalized. Chairman Whitfield adjourned the meeting at 2:38 PM.


Shannon K. Whitfield
Chairman/CEO
Walker County Georgia

06-27-2024
Date

Minutes prepared by: Walker County Board Clerk, Whitney Summey



Sign In Sheet

FY2025 Budget Work Session

June 3, 2024

9:00 AM

Name

Address

Angie Teems

Kerr Bush

District Attorney

Jen Testa

40 Blessed Way

Amy Brown

District Attorney's office

Eleha Floyd

District Attorney's office

Yvonne Veal

Tax Commissioner's office

Joel Johnson

Public Defender

Angela Ward

Assessors Office

Buddy Chapman

" "

Billy L.

Coroner

Sharon Evans

Tax Commissioner

Christy Gander

Probate Ct.

Don Stis

Probate Court

Danielle L. Montgomery

Elections

Todd Bird

Facilities

Sumner

Recreation

Jenna Stevens

Mtn. Cove Farms

PAINE GILY

LANDFILL

Steve Wilson

Sheriff's office

Rick Carr

Shop

Reena Eubanks

Public Library

Chelsea Kovalsky

Public Library

Misty Reyes

" "

Carl Sims

Roads