

**HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
6:00 P.M., MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024  
HABERSHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM  
295 LLEWELLYN STREET, CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523**

**AGENDA**

The Habersham County Board of Commissioners held a special called meeting on Monday, July 22, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Habersham County Courthouse located at 295 Llewellyn St, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

Present was Chairman Ty Akins, Vice Chairman Bruce Harkness, Commissioner Bruce Palmer, Commissioner Dustin Mealor, Commissioner Jimmy Tench, County Manager Alicia Vaughn, County Clerk Brandalin Carnes, staff, members of the media and the public.

Chairman Akins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Tench lead the invocation.

Commissioner Palmer lead the pledge of allegiance.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Palmer, seconded by Commissioner Mealor and voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the agenda as presented.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- a. Consider/Approve FY 2025 Budget

Chief Financial Officer Tim Sims gave a presentation on the proposed FY 2025 budget.

The total budget request for the general fund were \$44.6 million. This is the portion of the budget that is funded by property taxes. Out of this \$44.6 million in general fund requests, \$1.4 million was for twenty-four (24) newly requested positions and \$3.8 million was for capital project requests. Management has already made \$5.4 million in cuts to these requests, and after further review and consensus of the Commission, the requests were further cut down to \$1.69 million in CIP requests and the following new positions:

- 6- Full Time Firefighter/EMS positions
- 4- Full Time Facilities Maintenance Workers
- 1- Full Time IT Technician
- 1- Full Time Network Service Administrator
- 2- Part Time Animal Care Technicians

This budget includes a 4% raise for county employees, though it has yet to be determined by the Commission if this will be a merit raise or a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

The budget being proposed tonight includes a full rollback of the millage rate, which will result in a zero net tax increase for most citizens. While there is a \$900,000 increase in the projected property tax revenue, this is completely from new/organic growth from new construction, new parcels, subdivision of lots, etc. None of this projected increase is from reassessment growth. Property taxes make up 56.6% of the budgets revenue, with the remainder coming from other taxes, commissions, license and permit fees, intergovernmental funding, fines, forfeitures, etc. The proposed budget is based on the one initially presented on June 17<sup>th</sup> which

included a full rollback and a \$39.17 million general fund. The Commission had a consensus for \$1.69 million of the CIP requests but only \$1.65 million available within the constraints of this budget. To keep the budget balanced with a full rollback/no tax increase, the additional \$41,091 in funds needed to fully fund the CIP requests and \$748,405 needed to fund the 14 position requests (12 full time, 2 part time) came from savings/cuts which included:

- The school system funding 100% of the school resource officer costs (\$113,819).
- Decreasing funding to Partnership Habersham (\$34,000)
- Reduction of the pension payment to the minimum required and use of accumulated credits (\$454,576)
- Holding position hires until October 1<sup>st</sup> (\$187,101).

The total proposed FY 2025 budget across all funds is \$84,569,306 which is a 15.4% increase from the FY 2024 budget of \$73,316,205. Out of this, property taxes only comprise the \$39.17 million general fund, which is 46% of the overall budget. The remaining 54% of the budget is other funds that generate their own revenue such as the SPLOST fund, Special Revenue fund, Enterprise Fund, Hospital Debt Service, etc. This proposed budget includes a full rollback, which means that most individuals should not see an increase in the county portion of their property taxes, even if they don't have the property tax freeze exemption.

Mr. Sims has seen a lot of discussion on social media regarding the budget having increased by \$12 million dollars. While this is true, he wanted to clarify that this \$12 million increase is from an increase in revenue in the SPLOST fund, and an increase in grants for the special revenue funds and the enterprise funds. While it is an increase in the total budget overall, it does not result in an increase to the taxpayers through property taxes.

Mr. Sims also wanted to provide clarity to discussion surrounding the budget having increased dramatically in 2021. Prior to Mr. Sims having assumed the role of Chief Financial Officer, the budgets that were being presented to the Commission were incomplete. The budget that was presented and approved for FY 2021 was \$37.1 million but the total actual budget at the end of FY 2021 was \$52.5 million. This is due to the fact that the budget that was being presented for approval did not include such items as the SPLOST fund, a lot of the enterprise fund capital, the state road fund, and many grants. State budget law requires an annual budget for each individual fund. Mr. Sims made changes so that the budget complied with state law, which resulted in the appearance of a sudden increase in the budget.

Commissioner Akins asked if any of the other Commissioners had any questions for Mr. Sims. None of the other Commissioners had additional questions at this time.

Commissioner Akin inquired as to when the current SPLOST revenues started coming in? Mr. Sims informed him the County started receiving these revenues in April 2021. Commissioner Akins asked what year the laws changed regarding the County being able to collect taxes on internet sales? Mr. Sims stated that he was pretty sure that this happened during COVID around 2020. Mr. Sims added that, because the original SPLOST 7 estimates were based on old revenue that didn't include revenue from internet sales, they are running about 18%-20% ahead of schedule on collections. Mr. Sims wanted to provide clarity to some other discussions he has seen on social media, informing everyone that the county is allowed to collect for the entire 6-year period so long as they have an intergovernmental agreement with the municipalities. They also have tier 2 projects such as the hospital bonds. While the old law stated that you could not exceed the estimated amount for SPLOST collections, this was changed in 2015 to allow for collection over the entire 6-year period even if the estimated revenue has been exceeded. At this time around \$29-\$30 million has been collected but, until they reach the \$47 million mark, it is unknown how much extra will be received. Commissioner Pamer informed everyone that the law regarding collection of taxes on internet sales changed in January of 2019.

Chairman Akins invited members of the public who wished to speak regarding the proposed FY 2025 budget to address the Commission.

Mr. Bob Lonergan would like to know how much is spent on county vehicles being used by employees for personal use, stating that this would be a great place to cut costs. He went on to provide his thoughts on whether the 4% increase being proposed for county employees should be a merit increase or cost of living adjustment, stating that merit raises are a scheme to which he has fallen victim before.

Ms. Teresa Llewellyn has compared the FY 2024 budget to the FY 2025 budget and noticed that there are large increases in the County Manager's Office, the Tax Commissioner's Office and the Tax Assessors Office. She realizes that the \$400,000 increase in the Tax Assessor's Office is from the property reassessments, however she hopes that it is businesses who are being reassessed and not residents. Regarding the increase in the Parks and Recreation budget, Ms. Llewellyn feels that that the gymnastics program only benefits a small group of individuals and if everyone in the county were to vote on the matter, they wouldn't agree for their taxes to continue funding it. She feels that the increases in the budget are being driven by growth and she wants the Board of Commissioners or Planning Commission to take action to halt all of the housing projects and land developments that are being proposed. Chairman Akin informed Ms. Llewellyn that the Commission has discussed moratoriums on development before, however legislation has been passed by the state that limits the use of moratoriums to specific reasons. He realizes that in the past, citizens and previous commissions were anti zoning. He assured her that the Commission currently in the process of reviewing all of the development codes and land uses, however he reminded her that the Commission has no control over the municipalities, and because the infrastructure is located in the cities that is where a lot of the growth will occur.

Mr. Ken Furl requested some clarification on the assessment he received, wanting to know if the tax estimate that was on the assessment notice was based on the rollback being proposed? Chairman Akin stated that the tax estimate is based on last year's millage rat, and informed Mr. Furl that once the millage rate for this year is set everyone will get an actual bill based that includes the full rollback. Mr. Furl stated that the value of his home went up by 16% without his having made any improvements. County Manager Vaughn explained the homestead exemption freeze to Mr. Furl and asked him if he thought he had this, as it would offset any increase to his assessed value? Mr. Furl stated that he does not believe he has the homestead exemption freeze, and Mrs. Vaughn suggested that he talk to the Tax Assessors Office. Mr. Furl wanted to know if the 4% salary increase for county employees was a merit increase or cost of living adjustment, and if this was already incorporated in the budget? Mr. Furl does not feel that a merit increase should be automatically given, it should be based on an evaluation of job performance. Chairman Akins explained that the Commission has not yet determined if the 4% will be a COLA or merit increase, however in the case of a merit increase including these funds in the budget does not mean that all employees will automatically receive the full amount, it just means the funds are available. County Manager Vaughn informed Mr. Furl that employees have performance evaluations and that the score from this is what is used to determine any merit raises. Mr. Furl stated he appreciated the explanation.

Mr. Steven Pajek shared his thoughts on the gymnastics program. He takes issue with the fact that America has become a place where professional athletes and entertainers are mistaken for people of great importance when they are not necessary to anyone's daily life. What is really needed is doctors, lawyers, bankers, farmers, etc. He feels that the families that participate in the gymnastics program are essentially wanting taxpayers to pay a luxury tax that only benefits and exclusive set of the population. He feels that the families who participate in the gymnastics program should pay for it out of their own pockets.

Mr. Charlie Duncan stated that both he and his wife Heather Benton work, but they would be unable to afford to have their kids attend a privatized gymnastics program. He wanted to thank the County Commissioners and staff for listening to them and answering questions. Ms. Benton stated that she knows that the gymnastics

he and his wife work but neither of them would be able to afford a privatized program. He wanted to let them know how much they appreciate the responses they have gotten out of the county commissioners and staff during this process. They have asked for lots of information and have had lots of questions and they

have gotten a lot of assistance. Wife Heather Benton echoed his gratitude to the Commission and County staff for listening to them and responding to them during the process. They never stated that they would get what they want, but they have listened and looked over the information. A question was brought up about how many people benefit. They know there are close to 1000 impressions made. She has looked over the line items for gymnastics. Her questions echoed the sentiments of everyone else regarding why does it cost so much and where does the money go? She had 38 questions and was given feedback really quickly. They all want the same thing, transparency and to know how the dollars are working and why things aren't balancing. She feels that they are moving towards a better understanding. Her understanding is that at this time gymnastics is still part of the FY 2025 budget. She appreciates them keeping it in while they look at things. She knows they are looking at potentially privatizing gymnastics, but she encourages them to look at controlling the expenses to try to keep it with the county. Right now gymnastics sets at a 50% cost recovery but it usually is only 23% nationally.

Carol Lonergan expressed that historically, the purpose of taxes is to generate revenue for essential services such as highways, police and the justice system which benefits all citizens. She doesn't feel that this budget benefits all citizens, especially the elderly. She doesn't feel that the gymnastics program should be funded by taxpayer dollars and expressed that their alternatives sources for recreation programs such as the YMCA and potentially the school system. When her kids were growing up sports programs were provided through the school system, and with the school system receiving the bulk of the tax money, she doesn't understand why they can't pay to provide recreation programs for the kids.

Cole- 802 Yeoman Rd- He wanted to bring something up about the budget regarding employees for the county. The chart showing the 2% merit and 2% cost of living. There were so many people that came out during covid as essential employees. He feels that they should just give 4% to the county employees without making them have to do merit.

Ms. Paula Hanington informed the from the total 2021 budget of \$57 million to the total proposed 2025 budget of \$84.5 million, there has been an increase of \$27.5 million, or nearly 50%, over a 4-year period. Ms. Hanington expressed that this is unsustainable. She agrees that staff has been extremely polite and kind and that the process has been extremely cordial in discussions and disagreements over the budget. It is the hardest thing to move money out of a public entity budget because people get used to it. She is looking down the road and she can see that there will be a lot of other things that will come up that have high dollar values. The time is now to look at how to slow down the increases. She feels that in the budget process next year, it would be helpful to the community if each budget item was broken out like the gymnastics program was so you could see the revenue versus expenditures across all of the budgets. This would give everyone a better understanding and basis to judge increases. Commissioner Akins stated that this is all addressed during the budget hearings that happen in March and that they don't exclude the public. He invited her to attend next year. Ty Akins asked Ms. Vaughn about the number of meals that were served by meals on wheels and Mrs. Vaughn stated 55,000. He brought up that one could argue that this only serves a small population. He feels that if we take away services like these what kind of community would they be? She stated that children have parents to look after them whereas the elderly often have no one.

Mr. Ken Wagner feels that in the process of decision making, it is incumbent of the elected officials to go through the vetting process and ask themselves if a service being provided is the proper function of the government. He feels that the questions that should be asked when evaluating services are is it essential, is it affordable, and is it legal? While he agrees that programs like gymnastics are great for kids, he doesn't feel that the government should help in paying for them. Both of his children were in gymnastics, and his family had to budget for this and pay for it themselves. Regarding the new position requests, though he feels the fire fighter positions are essential but some of the others are not. He feels that positions like IT are outsourceable, whereas law enforcement or fire fighters are not, and that administrative jobs just feed into the government and make it have to grow bigger to continue to feed itself. Mr. Wagner expressed his appreciation to the Commission for providing an open forum for the citizens.

Mr. Richard Rumble feels that the Commission has done a great job cutting expenses where they can and is glad for the millage rate rollback, however he agrees with the other individuals who have stated that the County needs to start evaluating what are essential services and saying no to services that are not essential. Chairman Akin informed Mr. Rumble that since he has been a Commissioner, the only service that has been added was a small gym in the Recreation Department that generates its own income from fees. The conversations that have been had regarding recycling programs is to try to keep the trash out of the landfill and potentially make money from it.

Mr. Eric Holbrooks stated that he has spent the past year attending Commission meetings and visiting the different County Departments to learn how they work. He thanked the Commissioners, as he realizes after having ran for Commissioner himself that it is not an easy job. While he too has concerns regarding the gymnastics programs expenses, he has greater concern that if the Commissioners get rid of the program other recreation programs will be targeted next. He does not feel like they will ever get to a point where everyone is happy, however as a parent whose kids are extremely active in the recreation department he is thankful for the many program offerings.

Ms. Jeanette Loudermilk raises her grandchildren, who attend the Habersham County gymnastics program. She doesn't want her taxes to go up any more than anyone else, however she wants everyone to understand that this is not a free program. She pays \$185/month for her grandchildren to attend in addition to approximately \$1200/year for competition fees. She feels that the program builds character, gives the children structure, encourages them to work hard, builds their self-esteem and gives them something to be proud of. She wanted to remind everyone that while other sports are offered by the school system, gymnastics is not.

Mr. Kevin Gaddis congratulated the Commission for working to pass a balanced budget with a full millage rate rollback. He stated that he was disappointed to read in the Northeast Georgian that Commissioner Harkness had been left out of the conversations, as he feels all the Commissioners opinions should have been included. Regarding the gymnastics program, Mr. Gaddis does not feel that the government should be funding this program. He disagrees with Chairman Akins comparison of this program to the Meals on Wheels program, as he feels the Meals on Wheels program is vital whereas gymnastics is not. He echoed Ms. Hannington's previous statement about children having parents to care for them while many elderly individuals do not. Mr. Gaddis feels that the 4% raises for county employees should be entirely a cost-of-living adjustments as the cost of living has gone through the roof. He feels that merit increases are too subjective, stating most places have moved away from this practice. Mr. Gaddis wanted to express he disagreed with Chairman Akins earlier statement regarding approving a band program if there were 200 people lined up at the Courthouse saying they wanted it, stating that if Chairman Akins approved something like that he should resign. Chairman Akins stated that Mr. Gaddis misunderstood the conversation. In regard to Mr. Gaddis earlier comment about excluding Commissioner Harkness from conversations about the budget, Chairman Akins stated that no Commissioners were excluded.

Ms. Jenny Dover stated that she was a federal employee for forty years, and a manager for 26 of those years. There were many years where no managers nationwide got a raise because there was no money available for it. She feels the County should look at the salaries of the current management and ask if it is an appropriate time to give them a raise if the County can't afford to do so. In regard to the gymnastics issue, her husband and sons have coached at the Recreation Department for other sports as volunteers. They did not get paid for it. Also, her children's participation in these sports was not free, they had to pay for it and the travel involved themselves. She advised that the Commission needs to look at the budget, and if an item is not necessary it shouldn't be included.

Ms. Ashley Hatchett has children that attend a private gymnastics program, however she wished to speak in support of the Habersham County gymnastics program. She has fears for the Commission cutting the gymnastics budget, as it isn't a program that can be partially funded. The equipment must be kept in good repair, and it requires specialized coaches that know what they are doing. Gymnastics is a dangerous sport, and she has seen some devastating injuries. She feels that the Recreation Department as a whole is important

and that the Commission should want to keep the kids from having to go to a different county to participate in sports. While she doesn't personally feel that a private gym is more expensive than the county gym, she does see where it could be a hardship for families to have to travel out of the county. She is asking them not to rip the funding for this program out from under the parents tonight, but instead to take time to thoroughly review its budget.

There were no other members of the public who wished to speak after Ms. Ashley Hatchett.

In light of the fact that there were more citizens present at this meeting, Chairman Akin wished to share some information he has went over previously. He served on the Development Authority for seven years prior to becoming a Commissioner. In all of the economic development classes he has taken, he has heard of numerous studies that have shown that residents use more in services than they pay in tax revenue. One such study was done by Farm Bureau, as they wanted to show that government do not come out ahead when farms are torn down to build neighborhoods. In 1990 the tax digest showed Habersham County as being 51% residential. This most recent tax digest shows Habersham County as being 79% residential. Anyone who lives here can see the growth, as there are apartment complexes and neighborhoods being developed. A lot of this growth has occurred in the last couple of years. While the 2020 census shows Habersham County's population as approximately 47,000, this is questionable. Chairman Akins reached out to Georgia Power and HEMC. Just in the past 5 years, Georgia Power has added 1,076 meters and HEMC has add 1,150 meters. HEMC states that while some of these may be well pumps, barns or outbuildings but 90% or more will be residential living structures. If you multiply these figures by at least 2.5 people per meter, there is an increase of approximately 5,565 people which would put the population over 53,000. This Commission is trying to keep the same level of services as five and ten years ago but it is becoming increasingly difficult as the population grows. This is why the fire chief needs new firefighters, because they are running more calls. This is why the Superior Court decided they needed a new judge, because the caseload has increased. This why the Juvenile Court Judge received a raise, as based on her caseload she should have an Assistant Juvenile Court Judge. There is an ever-increasing demand for services such as landfill, transit, IT etc. in an environment where residential taxes are not covering it. And to add on to this, half of the residents in the county have a freeze on their assessment values so even if their homes go up on value they don't pay any increase in taxes. While this Commission has rolled the millage rate back, everyone has to keep in mind that being responsible also means continuing to provide the services that the citizens have asked for and properly maintaining county facilities.

Commissioner Tench stated that he whole heartedly disagreed with Chairman Akins in regard to the 2020 census. He was on the board for the 2020 census and you don't do it by the number of meters on the house. You go door to door and put out everything that is supposed to be sent in. Not everything was sent in for Habersham County. He knows for a fact that there were over 10,000 people on the north end of the county that were not counted. Chairman Akins informed Commissioner Tench that he is trying to make the same point, that the census was done during COVID and it was hard to get people to respond. Chairman Akins mother was on the census team and a lot of people didn't want to answer the door to respond. Commissioner Tench stated that COVID had nothing to do with this.

**b. Consider/Approve 2024 Millage Rate**

Chief Financial Officer Tim Sims reviewed the proposed 2024 millage rates with the Commission.

The proposed FY 2024 millage rates were as follows: General Fund millage rate at 11.771, Habersham Countywide Hospital millage rate of .757, Emergency Medical Services millage rate of 1.275 and the Habersham County Schools millage rate (pending their boards approval) of 10.354. The proposed FY 2025 budget included a full rollback of the general fund millage rate, which contributed to an overall decrease of .845 mills for property taxes for the county, not including the school board. The state requires the county to approve the school boards millage rate as part of the total millage rate due to the county billing and collecting it on their behalf. The school board is not changing their millage rate, which is why they are having to hold hearings for a tax increase. The total county levy for 2024 is 24.157 mills.

Commissioner Akins asked if any of the other Commissioners had any questions for Mr. Sims. None of the other Commissioners had additional questions at this time.

Chairman Akins invited members of the public who wished to speak regarding the proposed 2024 millage rates to address the Commission. There were no members of the public who wished to do so.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

a. Consider/Approve Resolution 2024-07-002 Adopting FY 2025 Budget

Commissioner Akins reminded the Commission of the proposed budget option that was presented during the work session and opened the floor up to discussion among the Commission.

Commissioner Palmer reiterated his support for the employee increase included in the FY 2025 budget being partially merit based. He feels that these merit increases are determined by the employees themselves through the work they do, and that if an employee is not performing well enough to get at least some kind of merit increase, they likely need to be seeking employment elsewhere. He proposed that if the Commission holds off on giving a COLA until January, they can give a 2% COLA at that time rather than the 1% without an increased cost to the county. Commissioner Mealor stated that he is in support of the 4% increase being entirely a COLA if it will bring consensus. Commissioner Palmer asked when Commissioner Mealor would want this to be effective, to which Commissioner Mealor replied that it would be effective at the start of the fiscal year. Commissioner Palmer argued that this would cost more to the county than the merit raises, which are spread out over the course of the year. Mrs. Vaughn informed Commissioner Palmer that he is correct in the fact that giving merit increases would put them under budget, however Commissioner Mealor's understanding of the full 4% still being included in the budget is correct. Commissioner Harkness voiced his support of the entirety of the 4% increase being a COLA. Commissioner Palmer conceded that he would agree to this as well. Mr. Sims informed the Commission that staff will need some time to key this change into the payroll system and asked about the increase starting as of September 1<sup>st</sup>? Mrs. Vaghn informed the Commission they could make the change retroactive to July 1<sup>st</sup> and let the employees know that the change will be reflected as of the first payroll of September. This suggestion was met with favor among the Commission.

Motion by Commissioner Mealor, seconded by Commissioner Palmer, to approve the FY 2025 Habersham County Budget and Budget Resolution for a General Fund of \$39,794,187 and totaling \$84,569,306 for all County Funds, with the inclusion of a 4% COLA to be administered on the 1<sup>st</sup> pay period of September 2024 and retroactively issued to the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2024, and to authorize the Chairman to sign and execute the Budget Resolution (2024-07-002) and any other documents needed. Motion carried 3-2 with Commissioner Tench and Commissioner Harkness dissenting.

b. Consider/Approve Resolution 2024-07-003 for FY 2024 Budget Amendment

Chief Financial Officer Tim Sims addressed the Commission. This budget adjustment resolution allows finance to cleanup the budget for auditing purposes. It does not increase last year's approved budget, and there are no changes to the amount of the individual funds. The resolution only allows for money to be moved from Departments that had surpluses in their budget to cover Departments whose expenditures exceeded their budget. Commissioner Akin asked if the County was able to come out under budget overall for this past fiscal year? Mr. Sims informed him that, while they are still in the process of paying some June expenses, it does appear that they will be under budget for FY 2024.

Motion by Commissioner Palmer, seconded by Commissioner Mealor to approve Resolution 2024-07-003 for the FY 2024 Budget Adjustment. Motion carried 3-2 with Commissioner Harkness and Commissioner Tench dissenting.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Consider/Approve Resolution 2024-07-004 Adopting 2024 Millage Rate

Motion by Commissioner Mealor, seconded by Commissioner Palmer to approve the Habersham County General Fund millage rate at 11.771, Habersham Countywide Hospital millage rate of .757, Emergency Medical Services millage rate of 1.275 and the Habersham County Schools millage rate (pending their boards approval) of 10.354. Furthermore, motion to authorize Chairman to sign and execute Resolution 2024-07-004 for the 2024 Tax Year Levy, the three PT-35 forms and any other documents needed for transmittal, of the digest to the Georgia Department of Revenue. Motion carries 3-2 with Commissioner Tench and Commissioner Harkness dissenting.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Commissioner Palmer stated that, while he would no longer be on the Commission, he plans to continue to attend the budget meetings that will be held in March next year. He challenged the other citizens of Habersham County to do the same so they too can be informed about what is in the budget and what is going on in their county. He would like to see citizens attend more Commission meetings in general, not just the ones that are centered on the budget, as there are important actions that take place at every meeting. Commissioner Palmer wanted to provide some clarity regarding the exemption value freeze that many residents have, stating that even though the assessed value on their notices may have gone up, they should also see where their notice shows an increase on the exemption as well. This means the taxable amount does not change. With the rollback that was included in this budget, most people should not see an increase in their property taxes and many who have the exemption value freeze should see a decrease in their property taxes.

Commissioner Harkness expressed his appreciation to the citizens and employees for taking time away from their families to attend the meeting and show support for their local county government.

Commissioner Mealor stated that while budget meetings can often be contentious, he thought that all those who attended tonight were both well spoken and cordial. He has taken lots of notes, as this process happens again next year, and he feels that it is important to take what is said to heart. He realizes they are not perfect and have things they can continue to improve on. He was glad to see members of the public that actually care and want to provide input.

Commissioner Tench wanted to thank everyone for attending. He realizes he may have gotten a little ill, however he doesn't like being called a liar.

Commissioner Akins informed everyone that the county has been operating for a month on a continuing budget resolution, which he feels is ultimately his fault as the Chairman. The staff reports to the Board of Commissioners, and he is supposed to lead the Commission to the best of his ability. He feels that he took some things for granted during the budget process, and that the budget not getting passed falls on him, not the staff. He has heard the staff offer to meet with members of the Commission several times and that they would meet with the Commission anywhere and anytime to go over any part of the budget. All of the Commissioners received two binders with budget details back in March, and he has never heard a Department Head or member of management state that they didn't have time to answer a question about something in their budget. He is sorry that he failed to get the Commission to work together this year. While he is not sure who the Chairman will be next year, he hopes that they can get the budget passed in a timely manner. He thanked everyone who attended and agreed with Commissioner Mealor's sentiments about taking



every comment seriously. He thanked the staff for all of their hard work, especially Mr. Sims who worked on getting this final version of the budget completed while on vacation.

**ADJOURN**

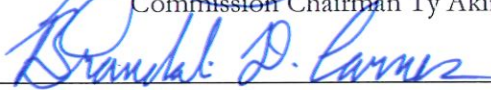
Motion by Commissioner Harkness, seconded by Commissioner Meador, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. Motion carries unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully submitted,

By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Chairman Ty Akins

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
County Clerk Brandalin Carnes

