

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**  
**August 4, 2020**  
**Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met for a Public Hearing at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday August 4, 2020, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia, with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, Thomson, McMichael, and Robinson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Fire/HEMA Chief Chris Stoner, Mark Byrd, and Dan Perdue.

County Attorney Tom Hall gave the Invocation.

Director of Administration Barry Holland led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Stalnaker announced that this was the second of three required public hearings held to inform the citizens that the Board of Commissioners will maintain the 2020 millage rate at 9.935 which funds the FY21 maintenance and operations of the general County government and the 2020 millage rate for Fire will remain at 1.177. The third and final public hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the County Annex building in Warner Robins on August 11th after which the millage will be adopted with the approved tax levy resolution. He stressed that that proposed millage rate for 2020 remains the same as the 2019 millage rate. It is misleading to advertise this as a tax increase, but State law requires it. The total increase in revenues for FY21 that the proposed millage rate will generate represents a 2.53% increase. This increase requires the three public hearings advising the public that the County could rollback the millage by 0.020 percent or slightly less than two hundredths of a mill. By not rolling back the millage to 9.915 mills the County will gain an additional \$82,604 to help fund the FY21 budget of \$61.1 million. This \$82,604 is projected income only since 100% of taxes would have to be collected to realize the additional revenue. The millage in Houston County for the 2016 tax year was 9.95, for 2017, 2018 and 2019 it was 9.935, and it is proposed again for the 2020 tax year at 9.935. In 1990 the millage rate was 8.97 mills and 30 years later there has been less than a one mill increase. He reiterated that 9.935 is the proposed millage rate for the 2020 tax year for General Fund operations and 1.177 for Fire. Houston County has also operated under a tax cap since the early 1980's and for the County to exceed the tax cap it would require voter approval. Since the millage is being maintained at last year's rate the only way you would actually see an increase on property taxes would be if your property had been reassessed at a higher value during the year due to construction of new improvements or additions to the property.

Chairman Stalnaker then closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Commissioners Comments.

Mr. Walker remarked that less than one mill increase over the past thirty years was phenomenal.

Mr. Thomson agreed and thanked the Chairman and Mr. Holland for their efforts.

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Mr. McMichael likewise agreed, thanked the Tax Assessors for their efforts and remarked that he was glad that we could continue to operate under the tax cap.

Chairman Stalnaker agreed that the Tax Assessors are doing a great job assembling the digest and Tax Commissioner Mark Kushinka is very effective at getting the bills out and collecting. He remarked that all three cities and the Board of Education are each going through the same process of holding three public hearings after choosing not to rollback. The positive thing is that there is some growth in the digest with about \$1,000,000 in new money on a gross digest of approximately \$4.4 billion.

There being no further comments Chairman Stalnaker closed Commissioners Comments and returned to the regular portion of the meeting.

Chairman Stalnaker then closed the regular portion of the meeting and opened Public Comments.

Jeff Fry, 102 Seven Pines Court, Perry asked the Board to rollback the rate to 9.915 mills. He thought that the Tax Assessors office needed to be closely watched so that property values were not inflated resulting in people paying more taxes and some ultimately losing their properties in a tax sale.

Chairman Stalnaker announced that the third and final public hearing required by law would be held Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Annex building in Warner Robins after which the Board will vote on the adoption of the 2020 millage rate. He thanked Mr. Fry for his comments and remarked that the Board has been very conservative with the revenue that the millage generates.

Motion to Adjourn by Mr. McMichael second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all, meeting adjourned.

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Barry Holland  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner

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