

Houston County Commissioners Meeting
July 23, 2018
Warner Robins, Georgia

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in special called meeting at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday July 23, 2018 at the Houston County Annex in Warner Robins, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners McMichael, Walker, Robinson, and Thomson present. Also present were County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Administration Barry Holland, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Director of Personnel Ken Carter, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Board of Tax Assessors member Ron Grace, and Ansel Peck.

County Attorney Tom Hall gave the invocation.

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

Chairman Stalnaker informed everyone that this was the first of three required public hearings held to inform the citizens that the Board of Commissioners will maintain the 2018 millage rate at 9.935 which funds the FY19 maintenance and operations of the general County government. He stressed that the proposed millage rate for 2018 remains the same as the 2017 millage rate. The total increase in revenues from tax for FY19 that the proposed millage rate will generate is \$578,305 which equates to a 1.54% increase. This increase requires the three public hearings advising the public that the County could rollback the millage by 0.17 percent or 17/100 of a mill. By not rolling back the millage to 9.918 mills the County will gain an additional \$65,157 to help fund the FY19 General Fund budget of \$57.3 million. This \$65,157 is anticipated income only since 100% of taxes would have to be collected to realize the additional revenue. The millage for Houston for 2016 tax year was 9.95, for 2017 it was 9.935, and for 2018 it is proposed again at 9.935. In 1990 the millage rate was 8.97 mills and 28 years later there has been less than a one mill increase. This is exceptional considering that the County has also operated under a tax cap since the early 1980's. He reiterated that 9.935 is the proposed millage rate for the 2018 tax year for General Fund operations. In closing, the Chairman commented that the required advertising for these public hearings on the millage rate calling it a tax increase is misleading since the millage is being maintained at last year's rate. He advised that 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 meeting and opened a public hearing on the proposed 2018 millage rate.

Ansel Peck, 109 Latham Drive, Warner Robins remarked that the Board has exhibited good management and agreed that property owners will only see an increase in taxes if reassessments raised a property's value due to improvements. He commended the Board, management staff and each department head.

Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the Board has been very prudent and fiscally responsible in the past. If the County were to rollback the millage rate and the economy were to then take a downturn raising the millage rate would certainly be necessary.

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Ron Grace, Houston County Tax Assessors Board member, commented that he has been involved with the Tax Assessors for many years and has always been impressed with the manner in which the Board of Commissioners operates.

Chairman Stalnaker thanked Mr. Grace and remarked that the Board of Tax Assessors has done a great job and that they are very fair to property owners.

There being no further public comments, Chairman Stalnaker closed the public hearing on the 2018 millage rate and reopened the regular meeting.

Mr. McMichael remarked that Fulton County was facing a large-scale increase in property values because their assessors had not reassessed for more than ten years.

Mr. Walker commended Mr. Grace on his long-time involvement with the Tax Assessors as both Chief Appraiser for many years and currently as a member of the Board of Tax Assessors since his retirement.

Chairman Stalnaker commented on the common misconception that property is taxed at 100% of its value when in reality a home is taxed on the assessed value or 40% of the fair market value.

Chairman Stalnaker announced that the second public hearing required by law would be held tonight at 6:00 p.m. at the Commissioners Board Room of the County Annex Building in Warner Robins and that the third public hearing would be held Monday, July 30, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. after which the Board will vote on the adoption of the 2018 millage rate.

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

Barry Holland
Director of Administration

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner

