

NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**1124 Clark Street
Covington, Georgia**

August 21, 2023

6:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES**

Present: Chairman Marcello Banes, Commissioner's Stan Edwards, Demond Mason, Ronnie Cowan (via phone) County Manager Harold Cooper, County Clerk Jackie Smith. Chairman Banes stated that Commissioner Cowan is in attendance via phone while in Louisiana.

Absent: Commissioner Alana Sanders, Commissioner J.C. Henderson
Staff: Brittany White, Finance Director
Others Present: 4 citizens

Chairman Banes called the public hearing to order and extended a welcome to all in attendance. Commissioner Edwards gave the invocation and Commissioner Mason led the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

Chairman Banes recognized County Manager Harold Cooper. Mr. Cooper noted we previously held public hearings regarding the millage rate in July however, the public hearing held (2pm) on July 18th was not in compliance with state requirements. He announced a public hearing was held this morning at 11:00 a.m. and this is our second public hearing today. The final public hearing will be held on August 28th followed by a special called meeting to adopt the millage rate. Mr. Cooper recognized finance director Brittany White who read the following statement into the record.

- Newton County has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 6.71 percent. This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 8.439 mills, an increase of .531 mills. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.908 mills.
- The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$300,000 is approximately \$61.60 and the proposed tax increase for a non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$275,000 is approximately \$58.41.
- Three (3) Public Hearings are required. This is the second Public Hearing. The first hearing was held on August 21st at 11 a.m. and the third hearing will be held on August 28th at 6 p.m.

Chairman Banes opened the public hearing for citizen comments at 6:06 p.m.
Comment Time: 3 minutes for each citizen.

Melissa York
Oxford

- Lifelong resident.
- Residence is located within the county where there is no county water.
- Area receives no county benefits.
- Their property values are decreasing due to area.
- Their property taxes continue to increase.
- Suggested county apply for a \$950,000,000 grant from the State of Georgia that would help the citizens.
- It would reduce the assessed value of the property by \$18,000. (homestead)
- 2023 Property Tax Relief Grant: Information is attached and made part of these minutes.

Jeff Bishop
Covington

- Concerned that assessment has increased 25%.
- Not angry or upset, but property taxes continue to increase.
- Main concern is that taxes will continue to go up unless things are gotten under control.
- Concerned that so many apartments are being constructed.

Chairman Banes closed the public hearing @ 6:39 p.m.

On a motion by Commissioner Edwards, and a second by Commissioner Mason, the work session adjourned @ 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie B. Smith, County Clerk

Marcello Banes, Chairman