

Council Minutes
City of Gordon
Public Hearing on Mill Rate
September 17, 2018

The Council of the City of Gordon held a Public Hearing on Monday, September 17, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Gordon City Hall located at 115 College Street. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to receive public input on a 1.3 mill rate increase as advertised. (Copy of Notice Of Property Tax Increase attached as advertised.) Members present were Mayor Kenneth Turner and Council Members Bruce Daniel, Freddie Densley, Terry Eady, Rose Lawrence, and Phyllis Payne. Councilman Wynn was absent.

Mayor called the Public Hearing to order.

Mayor explained that the purpose of the Public Hearing is to inform the public and receive input from the public on a proposed mill rate increase of 1.3 mills, which will yield approximately \$64,279.00, which will be needed in order to have a balanced budget. This is the first of three Public Hearings that are required in order to raise the mill rate 1.3 mills. (Copy of the Current 2018 Tax Digest & 5 Year History of Levy attached.)

Mayor went on to explain in detail why the mill rate increase is being proposed verses pulling additional money from the Georgia Fund 1 account.

Councilman Eady reported that the Property Tax Digest is down and LOST revenues are down which are the two main factors driving the city to the mill rate increase.

Having no further comments from Council, Mayor then called for comments, questions, etc. from the public.

Darryl Richardson stated several comments made by Miller Edwards on April 16, 2018 concerning the budget and referring to the audit ended September 30, 2017, including that the city was four months to the good. Mr. Richardson asked if several things including radios, towers, etc. eat into the four months he was talking about. He then asked, based on all this, what happened to go from four months to the good to having to raise the mill rate by 1.3 mills.

Mayor explained that what Mr. Edwards was probably referring to is four months to the good in the Georgia Fund 1 account at that time. Mayor explained that the city is trying to hold on to that reserve money for matching grants and emergencies rather than using it to support the General Fund. Mayor reminded all present that copies of last years audit are available for anyone who requests it.

Chief Mike Hall wanted to clarify that radio equipment, etc. was paid out of SPLOST Fund.

Council Member Lawrence stated that the minutes for 2018 have been reviewed and a list of

accomplishments for 2018 has been compiled and copies will be made available for the public. (Copy of the list of accomplishments attached.) She also made it clear that Miller Edwards said the General Fund was in good shape with the audit ended September 30, 2017, but the city must stop spending at the rate of \$424,000.00 as they have for the last four years. She went on to explain the purpose of the list of accomplishments will help explain why the city has to raise taxes in order to keep the city from becoming completely broke.

Mayor made it clear that the current council is working off a budget that was adopted by the former mayor and council. He also made it clear that a new audit has not been performed since the auditor that was hired last year.

Konreid Etheredge pointed out that the four hundred thousand plus dollars we keep referring to, if it will just carry the city for four months, then at the end of the four months we would have to shut the city down and walk off. He also asked how the reduction in the BASF production impacted the city as far as the Georgia Power franchise fees.

Councilman Eady said it's hurt everybody because most of our Georgia Power franchise fees come from BASF. He went on to explain how the franchise fees are effected and how the recession that started in 2008 effected the city when the interest rates in the Georgia Fund 1 account dropped.

Laverne Renfroe asked how much the mill rate has gone up in the last three years.

Mayor stated that the mill rate in 2016 was 5.855 mills, in 2017 it was 6.0 mills and in 2018 the proposed mill rate is 7.3 mills.

Doretha Whipple stated that she heard what the Mayor said about the water and sewer. She then asked was that coming from the General Fund, too.

Mayor said it was coming primarily from the Water & Sewer Fund and the SPLOST Fund.

Doretha Whipple said that 2.5 employees are being paid out of the Water & Sewer Fund and inquired if one of the employees could be paid out of another fund.

Mayor said there are basically only two funds and both funds were losing money so it would not be beneficial to move money from one fund to another because its not going to save you money.

Sheila Burney made the comment that when they were down here at the last meeting that they understood. The people are saying that we don't understand but we do understand, but we have

questions.

Mayor Turner said I've not said you don't understand, I hope not.

Sheila Burney said I just want to make that clear that we do understand.

Mayor Turner said I may have said that something someone said is incorrect. I might have said that.

Ms. Burney said I just want it put on record that we understand. We are not ignorant as to what's going on. We know that if you spend more than you put in then you are going to end up with a deficit. I just want to make it clear that we do understand.

Mayor said I appreciate that and we certainly do understand.

Darryl Richardson asked how the 1.3 mill increase will help the city in the coming year.

Mayor said the increase will help us balance the budget and keep the city from having to borrow money or take money from the reserve fund.

Doretha Whipple asked again if he said people could get a copy of the budget.

Mayor said yes that he told them that two weeks ago and the proposed budget has not changed since then.

Johnny Reese asked if the mill rate increase applied to stores and businesses, also.

Mayor said it applies to everybody who owns property.

Johnny Reese then said you collect money but not from everybody. Why did you say that?

Mayor said I didn't say that. I said instead of collecting 100% we collect about 97% due to deaths, people moving, etc.

Councilman Eady said some people don't pay their taxes for two or three years and he then advised them to look in the Wilkinson County Post. Fifas are issued on property taxes that have not been paid. So if taxes are not paid we don't get the money. That's part of the 3% we lose.

Johnny Reese asked if people had to pay on the houses if no one is staying in them.

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Mayor replied by saying yes that every property owner is assessed a tax bill.

Mayor called for any further comments or questions. Hearing none, Mayor stated we have two more hearings on the mill rate that will be open to the public. The next one is scheduled for September 24, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. Mayor then invited anybody and everybody to come and make a comment.

Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Oct. 1, 2018
Approved & Adopted

Kenneth L. Turner
Mayor

Juane Brown
City Clerk