



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

T. PAGE THARP GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING  
102 STARKSVILLE AVENUE NORTH, LEESBURG, GEORGIA 31763

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024 AT 4:30 P.M.  
T. PAGE THARP BUILDING  
KINCHAFOONEE CONFERENCE ROOM  
WWW.LEE.GA.US

BUDGET WORKSHOP

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### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Luke Singletary, Chairman	District 2
Chris Guarnieri, Vice-Chairman	District 4
Dennis Roland, Commissioner	District 1
Billy Mathis, Commissioner	District 3
George Walls, Commissioner	District 5

### COUNTY STAFF

Christi Dockery, County Manager  
Kaitlyn Good, County Clerk  
Jimmy Skipper, County Attorney  
Heather Jones, Co-Assistant County Manager/ Finance Director

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The Lee County Board of Commissioners met for a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. The meeting was held in the Kinchafoonee Conference Room of the Lee County T. Page Tharp Governmental Building in Leesburg, Georgia. Those present were Chairman Luke Singletary, Vice-Chairman Chris Guarnieri, Commissioner Dennis Roland, and Commissioner Billy Mathis. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery, County Clerk Kaitlyn Good, Co-Assistant County Manager/ Finance Director Heather Jones.

### CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Guarnieri called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

### BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

#### District Attorney's Office

At the previous Budget Workshop held April 23, 2024, the District Attorney presented his request for a 52% increase (approximately \$60,000.00). The DA lies in a circuit that involves 6 other counties and Ms. Dockery confirmed that Sumter County was providing a 9% increase in their budget. Last year, they were provided with a 15% increase. Clerk of Court Sara Clark spoke in support of the increase, citing the heavy caseload and additional courts they oversee.

Commissioner Mathis voiced support for the increase, adding that after a recent discussion with DA Lewis Lamb, the DA's Office would accept \$30,000.00 if the initial amount requested could not be accommodated. Commissioner Roland spoke in support of providing \$30,000.00 to the DA's Office. Commissioner Guarnieri asked how much a 9% increase would equate to, to which Finance Director Jones replied that it would be approximately \$10,000.00. Lee County has the largest population in the circuit.

Chairman Luke Singletary entered the meeting at 4:48pm.

#### Public Defender's Office

County Manager Dockery stated that the Public Defender's Office has asked for a 7.39% increase. Sumter County has recently increased this item in their budget by 5%.

#### Elections and Registration

The Elections and Registration Office has asked for an additional \$47,000.00. Director of Elections and Registration Veronica Johnson was present and summarized her request for an increase in pay for her five (5) board members from \$100.00 to \$150.00. This would be an increase of approximately \$1,800.00 per year. There were also several major changes regarding elections in this year's legislative session that may result in more



costs. Commissioner Mathis voiced support in the increase stating the expenses for this department are mandated; therefore the County has no choice.

#### Express Disposal

Express Disposal has requested a 4% increase, which if passed to the customers would equate to approximately \$1.00. The Board was in agreement. The garbage rate will increase from \$23.00 to \$24.00. Ms. Jones added that the staff and customer service with Express Disposal has been great to work with.

#### County Extension Office

Doug Collins, the County Extension Office has requested a salary increase of \$1,863.00 per year. Ms. Dockery stated that this request was made prior to the announcement of the 4% increase for state employees. The state increase is 4%, capped at \$3,000.00.

#### Supplement for Elected Officials

A discussion was held as to providing all elected officials the same \$10,000.00 supplement.

#### Salary Study

County Manager Christi Dockery stated that the preliminary report had been received; however, several things needed to be corrected by Archer. Once this final version is received, it will be sent to Management. There is approximately \$1.8 million in contingency that can be set aside to implement this. There could be several ways to implement the findings, including all at once or over a two to three year period. Human Resources Director Brandy Davis added that something needed to be done in response to these findings. The Board cannot not act on these findings.

Commissioner Mathis stated he had concerns with only the starting pay of the Sheriff's Office and Fire & EMS departments. Commissioner Guarnieri stated there were problems across the board. Chairman Singletary stated they shouldn't steer away from the salary study results.

Concerns over some of the results and issues regarding departmental equity were discussed. Namely, if awarding a pay amount based on longevity, as suggested in the report. Specifically, if there are two individuals within one department that have been with that department for roughly the same length of time, but one of the employees was with another department for a time before starting here, their pay could look drastically different for essentially having the same amount of departmental experience. This could potentially lead to increased morale problems.

At this point, while recruitment is essential, retention is more important. The institutional knowledge is invaluable and we must do what we can to keep employees. Oftentimes, the County will pay for trainings for employees and once trained, it is very easy to lose them to higher paying entity. Examples were cited from the Sheriff's Office and Jail, E-911 Center, and the Tax Assessor's Office.

Commissioner Mathis suggested each Department Head have the opportunity to discuss their departments with Archer and County management before implementation. Commissioner Guarnieri mentioned merit raises and the possibility of implementing those in the future in addition to the longevity and COLA adjustments. Chairman Singletary added that the implementation of the salary study should include Archer's recommendation, Department Head input, and employee performance.

A conference call with personnel with the Archer Company will be set up for a future date. Department Heads will also have the opportunity to speak with County management.

#### General Discussions

Referring to Contingency, there are funds available in that line item that can be pulled to aid any department that needs it throughout the year.



**PUBLIC FORUM**

*Citizens will be allowed to address the Board of Commissioners regarding any issues or complaints. Individuals should sign up prior to the start of the meeting.*

With no comments or questions from the Board, staff, or audience, the Public Forum was closed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(A) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 6:00pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:50PM.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY CLERK

*Lee County is a thriving vibrant community celebrated for its value of tradition encompassing a safe family oriented community, schools of excellence, and life long opportunities for prosperity and happiness without sacrificing the rural agricultural tapestry.*

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