



**Gordon County Board of Commissioners
SPLOST and Legislative Update Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 11, 2023 - 3:00 p.m.
Gordon County Judicial Building**

PRESENT: M.L. "Bud" Owens, Chair, Gordon County
Kevin Cunningham, Vice-Chair, Gordon County
Bruce Potts, Commissioner, Gordon County
Jim Ledbetter, County Administrator, Gordon County
Hollis Barton, County Clerk, Gordon County
Keith King, Executive Assistant, Gordon County
Jimmy Palmer, Mayor, City of Calhoun
Paul Worley, Manager, City of Calhoun
Matt Barton, State of Georgia Representative
James Miller, Mayor, City of Plainville
Nathan Wyatt, Mayor, Town of Resaca
Frank Beacham, Attorney, City of Plainville

I. Call to Order

County Administrator Jim Ledbetter called the meeting to order. Mr. Ledbetter stated Mayor Brannon was unable to attend today. Mr. Ledbetter then gave an overview of the importance of SPLOST and its referendum. Stated without it, taxes would go up and many projects and services would be affected.

II. Order of Business

A. SPLOST Update

Mr. Ledbetter stated the County was in the process of estimating costs very carefully and preparing a sensible SPLOST referendum to put before the voters. Stated our current state of development we are experiencing heightens the need for this SPLOST as well.

Mr. Ledbetter then gave an overview of past projects such as the Judicial Building, fire hydrants, trucks and various equipment for Public Safety and Public Works.

Stated the SPLOST 2018 collections were greatly increasing up until the last collection report, with LOST collections decreasing consecutively the last three (3) months. Stated the goal for Gordon County is to budget the SPLOST revenue conservatively. Stated after consulting with an outside firm for recommendations as well as an overview from Finance, the expected revenue is estimated at 76-77 million dollars. Stated it would be advertised as the previous SPLOST with an estimate, with any overages or losses being upheld per the agreed distribution between entities.

For percentages, stated the County is considering dividing according to population; however, because of the services in the respected cities, this affects the county and the priority is to partner with our entities on projects that will benefit all citizens.

In establishing a timeline, after today's mandatory meeting, we are anticipating to have an agreement reached by June 15, 2023 that will be executed among the City of Calhoun Council that will then be adopted and executed at the Board of Commissioners June 20, 2023 meeting. Following that meeting, the Resolution will be forwarded to Elections Director Shea Hicks who will follow the necessary procedure for the November election. Stated on April 30, 2024 SPLOST 2018 collections will end, and if the upcoming SPLOST is voted in, collections will begin May 1, 2024.

Mr. Ledbetter followed this with an overview of proposed projects. Stated the majority of the proposed projects were infrastructure focused. Stated there are no special projects on the table, only governmental essentials at this time.

Chair Owens stated we needed to be frugal with the incoming collections and is looking forward to the opportunity to work jointly with all of the entities to benefit all areas and show how citizens' needs and services would be detrimental to the taxpayer without this SPLOST.

Vice-Chair Cunningham seconded Chair Owens's comments and noted we needed to keep up with the growth and the importance of fire stations and the ISO ratings. Stated he is also looking forward to working with the entities.

Commissioner Potts stated transportation is important with the incoming growth and believes SPLOST helps us catch up as we grow.

City Manager Paul Worley stated the City of Calhoun is looking forward to working with everyone as well. Stated he believes we all see the growth and foresee further growth and the responsibility to provide and maintain the level of service that comes with it.

Stated the City is focusing on similar areas as the County such as transportation, sidewalks, utilities, plants and distribution, equipment and improvements for Public Works and Public Safety, etc. Stated they are discussing a few quality of life projects and are assessing the needs throughout the City and will discuss with the Mayor and Council for finalizations.

Mayor Palmer of Calhoun stated he agreed with Mr. Ledbetter on the importance of SPLOST and what it means to each community. Stated we have an opportunity for new projects and equipment that is needed for day-to-day operations. Mayor Palmer then acknowledged the communication between the entities and stated there is a real opportunity for partnership and that he is looking forward to. Stated overall, SPLOST is the major way to see that partnership and improvements and its continuation.

Stated SPLOST makes it possible to keep the millage rate low, for water and infrastructure improvements, noting that we are able to do more through SPLOST.

Mayor Wyatt of Resaca agreed on the importance of SPLOST. Stated their priorities are completing sewer updates and updating Town Hall facility, baseball fields, and a community storm shelter. Stated he believes we have a well rounded group to make it happen.

Mayor Miller of Plainville also agreed on the importance of SPLOST. Stated we would simply not be able to do or complete projects underway without it. Stated stormwater management would be at the top of their priorities for this upcoming SPLOST. Mr. Beecham agreed that stormwater improvements are an area of need and believes it would be a good project for the team to approach.

Mr. Ledbetter agreed and stated he believes everyone has our citizen's best interests at the forefront.

B. Legislative Update from State Representative Matt Barton

Representative Barton stated we are fortunate to have what we have and keep our property taxes lower. Rep. Barton then gave an overview of the last two legislative sessions and taxes. Stated there was \$4 million in relief, \$1 million in rebates, and they were hopeful assessments will be down this year. Stated there was \$1 billion in gas tax relief, which was the biggest tax cut in Georgia history; \$1 billion in homestead, and a pay raise for public safety and frontline workers. Stated there was \$115 million for school security; \$4.9 million for GBI for various programs and updates. Rep. Barton then gave an overview on the Hope Scholarship and education updates; provided updates on bills that were passed. Stated he submitted two bills personally, one regarding temporary operating permits, and one regarding the Town of Ranger. Stated he was available for

questions. Stated the Department of Transportation was receiving feedback regarding Plainville until May 5, 2023 for Highway 53.

Chair Owens then stated to Rep. Barton we were planning to have an additional legislative update with all of our legislators and would appreciate his help. Rep. Barton stated he would be glad to help.

III. Other

IV. Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by common consent.