STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HENRY

The Henry County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting ***in-person*** on Thursday, May 30, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., at the Henry County Administration Building (Community Room), 140 Henry Parkway, McDonough GA. Henry TV also streamed this live online at its website, as well as Charter/Spectrum Channel 180 and Facebook Live. The *Henry Daily Herald* was notified of this meeting. Those present were:

Carlotta Harrell, Chair
Johnny Wilson, District I Commissioner
Neat Robinson, District II Commissioner
Dee Anglyn III, District III Commissioner
Michael Price, District IV Commissioner (via telephone)
Kevin J. Lewis, District V Commissioner

Also attending: Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager; Serena Nowell, County Attorney; and Stephanie Braun, County Clerk.

HENRY COUNTY CODE OF CONDUCT

(Sec. 2-2-128: Conduct during public meetings)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge was recited.

CALL TO ORDER

Carlotta Harrell, Chair, called the Special Called Meeting of the Henry County Board of Commissioners for Thursday, May 30, 2024, at 5:33 p.m. to order.

Chair Harrell stated that this is the final budget hearing and presentation before the adoption of the FY2025 budget. We will begin with presentations from staff, followed by the public hearing portion. Since this is the last public hearing, there will be an allotted time totaling 30 minutes.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

(Public Hearing & Adoption) Regarding FY 2025 Proposed Budget. *(Presenter: Bernita Campbell, Budget Director)* **Resolution 24-145**

County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews explained that if a department is not mentioned in the presentation, it indicates that the department did not request any changes to the current FY 2024 budget. She clarified that the FY 2025 budget summaries do not include the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) as it still requires board approval. The summaries also do not cover benefits such as insurance and taxes, as well as new personnel, adjustments, and vacancies with the exception of Parks and Recreation.

County Manager Cheri Hobson-Matthews presented the **Board of Commissioners' budget**. The current operating budget is $1,296,032 for all six commissioners and their support staff. The recommended FY25 budget is $1,326,032.

Ms. Matthews then moved on to the **County Manager's Budget**. This office currently has a budget of $875,916, with a recommended budget of $846,116 for FY25.

Chair Harrell pointed out to the County Manager that she did not see the fees for North Georgia Water Planning District, which also come out of the Board of Commissioners' budget. The County Manager stated for clarification that only increases are listed which include ACCG and ARC. The North Georgia Water Planning District did not have an increase so it is not listed, but is included in the Board of Commissioners budget.

Shannan Sagnot, Cluster Lead for Administrative & Constituent Services, oversees the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Communications, Elections, Human Resources, and Risk Management. Ms. Sagnot stated that Communications, Human Resources, and Risk Management do not have any increase proposals, so there is no information regarding those departments. She mentioned that Community Development will present both a general fund slide and a grant fund slide. The current general fund budget is $865,351, with a recommended FY25 amount of $869,676. The current grant fund budget is $1,776,746, and the recommended FY25 budget is $1,780,544. Ms. Sagnot stated for Elections and Voter Registration the current budget is $3,154,558 and the recommended budget is $3,261,422 for FY25.

Josh Fenn, Director for Henry County Development Authority, mentioned that this is their first request for a budget increase, aimed at addressing some personnel needs and potentially enhancing marketing efforts if funds allow. He emphasized the necessity to expand office space due to reaching full staff capacity. They aim to grow their team if positions are reallocated to the Development Authority. The current budget stands at $817,126, with a requested budget of $970,689. However, the recommended budget remains at $817,126for FY25.

Hutch Purvis, Cluster Lead for Asset and Information Management, which consists of Facilities Maintenance, Fleet and Technology Services mentioned Fleet Services' current budget is $1,961,840 with a requested budget of $ 2,208,410 with a recommended budget of $2,003,644 for FY25. The requested budget is to cover additional repair and maintenance costs. For Technology services the current FY24 budget is $7,376,853 with a requested budget of $7,892,868 and the recommended FY25 budget of $7,786,792. For Facilities maintenance the current FY24 budget is $5,589,903 with a requested FY25 budget of $5,503,355 and the recommended FY25 budget is $5,503,355.

David Smith, Cluster Lead for Financial Services which includes Budget, Finance and Purchasing. Mr. Smith stated this is his first time coming before the Board making a request regarding the budget. He stated in the Budget Department they need another analyst to keep up with the workload. The current FY24 budget is $424,346, with a request of $514,346 and the recommended FY25 budget is $429,346. Mr. Smith stated in Finance because of the large programs they have had recently pertaining to ARPA and ERAP the audit cost has increased significantly. The current FY24 budget is $1,393,739; the requested FY25 budget is $1,641,684, with the recommended amount being $1,641,684. In purchasing the current budget is $776,549, with the requested FY25 budget being $830,955, and the recommended FY25 budget of $776,729.

Jonthan Penn, Cluster Lead for Leisure Public Services which consist of Parks and Recreation, Seniors Services and the UGA Extension Services. For Parks and Recreation the current FY2 budget is $8,156,382, the request FY25 budget is $9,375,669 and the recommendation budget is $ 9,252,876. For

Senior Services the current FY 24 budget is $ 5,486,954 the request Fy25 budget is $ 5,530,354 and the recommended budget is $ 5,530,354. For extension services current FY24 budget is $394,256, the request GY25 budget in the amount of $ 418,664 and the recommended FY25 budget of $394,256.

Toussaint Kirk, Cluster Lead for Planning & Economic Development which includes the Building and Plan Review, Planning and Zoning, Transit, and GIS. Planning and Zoning and GIS did not ask for a budget increase. Mr. Kirk stated that Building's current FY24 budget is $2,567,722, with a requested FY25 budget in the amount of $ 2,637,916, and recommended budget of $ 2,610,884. For Transit, the current FY24 budget is $3, 391,070, the requested FY25 amount is $3,561,082, and the recommended FY25 budget is $3,417,435.

Roque Romero is the Cluster Lead for Public Works, which includes the Department of Transportation, Stormwater, and SPLOST Transportation Planning. The Department of Transportation is divided into two sections: DOT-ADMIN and DOT-ROW. The DOT-ADMIN current FY24 budget is $4,324,631. The requested FY25 budget is $4,438,007, and the recommended budget is $4,324,631. The DOT-Right of Way (ROW) current FY24 budget is $3,811,347. The requested FY25 budget is $5,836,000, and the recommended budget is $5,081,000.

John Selfe, Tax Assessor, presented the current FY24 budget of $4,128,127. The requested FY25 budget amount is $4,440,531, and the recommended amount is $4,374,181.

Michael Harris, Tax Commissioner, presented the current FY24 budget of $4,136,687. The requested FY25 budget amount is $4,149,337, and the recommended amount is $4,149,377.

Pam Bettis, Solicitor General, presented the current FY24 budget of $3,966,678. The requested FY25 budget amount is $4,105,245, while the recommended amount is $3,973,446. Ms. Bettis requested funding for small equipment related to tactical weapons and asked for two additional personnel positions: one full-time Assistant Solicitor General (also known as a prosecutor attorney) and one part-time employee.

Patti Johnson, Clerk of Juvenile Court, announced that Chief Judge Bartles will be retiring this year. She mentioned that he has personally covered the costs of his training, work cell phone, and the computer he uses outside the office. Ms. Johnson is requesting an increase in the budget to cover the training and technology expenses for a new judge. The current FY24 budget is $2,653,187. The requested FY25 budget amount is $2,664,687, and the recommended amount is $2,661,187.

Jennifer Lewis, Chief Public Defender and PJ Ross, Office Manager, presented the current FY24 budget of $2,712,434. The requested FY25 budget amount is $2,954,545, while the recommended amount is $2,819,974. Ms. Lewis is requesting funding for two additional positions: one court investigator and one client advocate.

Sabriya Hill, Superior Court Clerk, along with Chief Deputy Clerk Kimberly Phillips, requested a transfer of $45,000 to a new budget for the Board of Equalization, which will be designated as department 2182. This separation is required by Georgia statute. Ms. Hill emphasized that the Board of Equalization needs staffing and is asking for a Deputy Clerk position for that Board. For the Clerk of Superior Court, the current FY24 budget is $2,766,607. The requested FY25 budget amount is $2,881,367, and the recommended amount is $2,721,607. Ms. Hill is asking for four positions in the clerk's office. The Board of Equalization currently has no budget, but the requested FY25 amount is $83,651.33, and the recommended amount is $45,000. Ms. Hill noted that she is not requesting any increase related to the jury and bailiffs.

Carl Brown, Director of Sentence Enforcement, presented the current FY24 budget of $2,178,606. The requested FY25 budget amount is $2,320,642, and the recommended amount is $2,214,053. Mr. Brown is requesting two probation officer positions.

Angie Sorrow, On behalf of Chief Judge Amero for Superior Court, Ms. Sorrows presented the current FY24 budget amount of $895,802. The requested FY25 amount is $1,048,127, while the recommended amount is $923,786. Ms. Sorrows requested funding for several personnel positions, including a program administrator, a judicial assistant, a staff attorney, as well as supplemental increases and a stipend for the Chief Judge.

Chief Judge Vinny Lotti of Henry County State Court, Mr. Lotti presented the current FY24 budget for State Court Judges, which is $2,803,316. The requested FY25 budget is $3,070,896, and the recommended amount for FY25 is $3,008,316. Mr. Lotti requested funding for indigent defense, a Senior Judge, court reporter and interpreter costs (including $26,000 transferred from the State Court Clerk), reallocation, and an interpreter.

Jen Harvey, Chief Deputy Clerk of the State Court Clerk's Office, presented the current FY24 budget of $2,205,638. The requested FY25 amount is $2,333,694, and the recommended budget for FY25 is $2,197,138. Ms. Harvey requested a financial clerk and two deputy clerk positions.

Debbie Venuto, Chief Assistant District Attorney, and **Sybil Price, Deputy Chief,** came forward to present. The current FY24 budget is in the amount of $4,296,393, and the requested FY25 budget is in the amount of $4,460,805, and the FY25 recommended budget is in the amount of $4,305,805. Ms. Venuto requested more personnel for their department. Ms. Venuto would like to reclassify positions to be more comparable with other metro Atlanta counties.

County Manager Hobson-Matthews addressed the Board, noting that numerous personnel requests had not been included in any of the budget proposals. She explained that they will begin by reviewing all current vacancies and then prioritize filling positions where they are most needed. Ms. Matthews mentioned that, concerning attorneys, they are collaborating with the HR department to properly classify the attorneys within their respective units. She committed to the Board that she would work closely with the judicial team to determine appropriate salary levels. She emphasized that she will not make arbitrary decisions regarding salaries for individual units without considering the entire system. She requested time from the Board to work with the HR team to develop a fair and efficient mechanism for salary determination across all units.

Ashley Larrow, Chief of Staff for County Manager, will be presenting for **Public Safety** because the Public Safety Director, Mark Amerman, could not be present tonight. Public Safety includes the **Coroner, Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management and Homeland Security.**

E911, Police Department, and Fire Rescue. Ms. Larrow came forward with the following budget details:

Coroner: The current FY24 budget is $425,257. The FY25 requested amount is $476,407, and the FY25 recommended budget amount is $431,407.

Sheriff's Office: The current FY24 budget is $34,512,838. The FY25 requested budget amount is $36,511,624, and the FY25 recommended budget amount is $35,709,826.

Emergency Management and Homeland Security: The current FY24 budget is $1,608,713. The requested FY25 budget is $1,740,744, and the recommended FY25 budget is $1,650,963.

Police Department: The current FY24 budget is $40,155,708. The FY25 requested amount is $40,514,503, and the FY25 recommended budget is $40,289,709.

Code Enforcement: The current FY24 budget is $1,413,136. The requested FY25 budget is $1,427,236, and the recommended FY25 budget is $1,427,236.

Animal Care and Control: The current FY24 budget is $1,801,778. The requested FY25 budget is $2,066,306, and the recommended FY25 budget is $1,830,694.

Fire Rescue: The current FY24 budget is $43,904,176. The requested FY25 budget is $49,450,707, and the recommended FY25 budget is $46,565,679.

Bernita Campbell, Budget Director, announced that today is the second and final public hearing before the adoption of the FY25 budget. She stated that over the past month, they have held multiple meetings. Ms. Campbell presented four budget options:

Option One: Proposed budget amount of $252.7 million, which includes the Board of Commissioners (BOC) priorities, pension funding, employee benefits, competitive salaries, and funding for all departmental vacancies. This option does not include funding for FY25 departmental operating requests, new debt (CEP, EMA/E911 facility, Locust Grove tag office, Fire/Police training facility), or capital requests.

Option Two: Proposed budget amount of $259.7 million. This includes BOC priorities, funding for all departmental vacancies, addressing 42% of departmental FY25 operational requests, additional funding for the Fire Department, OPEX/CAPEX, and maintaining current service levels for all departments. It does not include funding for departmental capital needs other than the Fire Department (including CEP, EMA/E911 facility, Locust Grove tag office, Fire/Police training facility) or funding for future growth or departmental needs other than the Fire Department.

Option Three: Proposed budget amount of $269.9 million. This includes BOC priorities (employee-focused), NFPA staffing compliance for the Fire Department, funding to assist the Fire Department in achieving an ISO rating of 1, and OPEX funding for fire stations 18 and 19. This option does not include funding for departmental capital needs other than the Fire Department (including CEP, EMA/E911 facility, Locust Grove tag office, Fire/Police training facility) or for 77 general fund vacancies across multiple departments.

Option Four: Proposed budget amount of $259.7 million. This includes BOC priorities (employee-focused), funding for all departmental vacancies, addressing 42% of departmental FY25 operational requests, additional funding for all departmental OPEX/CAPEX needs, maintaining current service levels, and preparing for future growth.

<u>PUBLIC HEARING:</u>
Each speaker will have three minutes to speak:

1) Jocelyn Williams, District 4 asked if there is an increase for the senior citizens and how will it affect taxes.

2) Vanessa Thomas, Councilwoman for City of McDonough, District 5 – asked about excess funds what we currently have in lieu of increasing the millage rate.

3) Ann Fields, District 4 –asked about raising the millage and the slide posted on social media.

4) Shanice Darlington, District 5 stated she works for the State so she understands there is grant funding being allocated to Henry County. She wants to know how that grant funding is being spent.

5) John Page, District 5 stated his concern is the disparity between residential and commercial taxes.

Vote: Commissioner Lewis moved to adopt the FY2025 budget in the amount of $259.7 Million Dollars; Commissioner Anglyn seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair

Stephanie Braun, County Clerk