



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Minutes - Draft

FAB-Finance, Audit & Budget Committee

Thursday, July 22, 2021

11:00 AM

Special Called Meeting

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available

(1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage,

(2) on DCTVChannel23.TV

Meeting Started At: 11:00AM

Attendees: Commissioners Rader, Johnson, Cochran-Johnson, Terry, Bradshaw, Davis Johnson, Patrick

Present 3 - Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Jeff Rader, and
Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson

I. STATUS UPDATE

Midyear Budget

-Z Williams: We are appreciative to talk to you about where we are in the budget process. In the last couple of weeks, we have been provided more clarity regarding several items. One of those is what are eligible expenses for ARP. We found an opportunity to shift around \$5M from the budget to ARP. Mr. Sigler will walk the BOC through what we have found as it relates to revenues. We will also discuss enhancements in public safety in this budget. Additionally, we will focus on an enhanced sense of place; will add more funds to Beautification to ensure areas and neighborhoods look that much nicer. Finally, there is economic development; we will be proposing an enhancement of economic development that has gone through the PECS committee.

-Question JR: We have already taken action on the pay structure for public safety bonuses, setting the millage rates, and allocation of funds to the CSB. Could you tell me what of this budget you would like to address at the upcoming BOC meeting?

Z Williams: what you will find is that the budget is effectively what you have seen, with the exception of those things just identified. Our requested vote on the budget in its entirety is appropriate.

JR: several of the points that you brought up are new points. We are 6 days before our next meetings; this is a preliminary item. Is there a placeholder in the agenda?

Z Williams: there is

JR: I would like to give staff the opportunity to see this new document; also if there are items that you think are high priority, such as retention bonuses for the remaining staff, and if there are additional certain things to be done on Tuesday let's get a cursory review first.

-Question LCJ: are we referring to the document that was sent this morning from Mr. Manson as the final document that has the final proposed allocations?

Z Williams: that document that was sent was relevant to amendments that committees discussed, and the FAB committee will take action on whether these will be included in the final budget resolution.

-Question LCJ: are we at a point today to make all final recommendations?

Z Williams: what we will be asking today, is if there is anything the committee is seeking to include, and we are asking for a due pass on the recommendation

-Question LJ: My mindset was different about this meeting. Basically we are getting requests from the committee, but we also need to hear about the last piece of retention bonuses for employees. The ARP budget would come later, and this would include public safety Mr. Williams?

Z Williams: we will walk through the budget modifications from last time that would lay it all out. We will not discuss the ARP. The retention bonuses are not ARP and will be included today. We are considering the Sheriff's requests, and we are still walking through evaluating requests for pay increases.

-CEO Thurmond: one of the things I'd like to emphasize is that there are minimal changes from the administration relative to the budget. The BOC has the right to review them, but wholesale changes have not been made.

-Question LCJ: Reviewing these documents, I do want to ensure and verify that we have already made the commitments the sheriff sent to us in yesterday's communication? We have made a hefty investment in policing.

CEO Thurmond: absolutely; once we lay out what we have today it will create more clarity as to next steps on where we ought to be

-Question MDJ: regarding these vacancies, in what areas is she referring?

LCJ: there was around 56 or 58 vacancies within the Sheriff's department; the document we received yesterday lists where those vacancies are

LJ: please send me a copy as well

Z Williams: the presentation will allow Mr. Sigler to walk through the investments in the Sheriff's office, public safety, and enhanced sense of place.

-presentation of administration's budgetary changes from Director Sigler

-IT: funding for cybersecurity, remote work. \$7.3M increase

-Question JR: what is the dollar amount of the Azure migration?

J Matelski: this would cover us for 3 years; total cost \$2M

-CEO discussed Beautification efforts

-CEO Thurmond: the BOC and CEO's office have worked in partnership on quality of life initiatives. This is an aspirational request of the midyear budget to design and install gateway improvements along specific interchanges and roadways in DeKalb. Our efforts have paid dividends, and I would like to move beyond blight control and litter removal, and try to beautify sections of our county that have been neglected. These would increase tourism, economic development, increase property values; studies show this type of investment would help with crime control as well.

-Question JR what is the total for the interchange program?

TJ Sigler: we are budgeting \$2.5M for that project

-Question JR: in many jurisdictions, community improvement districts do this type of work. Will we expect to take that over from CID's or look to assist them?

CEO Thurmond: These are opportunities to partner. Some of the existing CID's in the county there may not be this existing or may not have the funding. What we are trying to do is jumpstart it and may encourage existing CID's to encourage going forward.

-LJ: this is a great first step, our areas need to have some character and definition to help propel these areas. I see that happening in entry-ways in other jurisdictions. Please identify the department that will keep this going, so that it does not go by the wayside.

CEO Thurmond: we'll be back before any work is done; that is something we'll ask the commissioners to weigh in on. The landscaping is done by a private contractor to keep the streetscapes up on a current basis; this is new territory. I was hoping to see whether the Board thinks this is a way to go, so that we can work together and by next spring we would be able to move forward with the process.

LJ: let's move next year to start painting those red bricks on Candler. Also a lot of the lights on these streets have been hit, and need to be put back up; the more lights you have in an area it can help address crime in areas.

-Question LCJ: I agree with what I'm hearing; our streetscapes at many of these intersections are the entryway into DeKalb. I would like to verify if there a document to review these changes?

TJ Sigler: we haven't finished everything regarding the letter and other items; that should be to you shortly

-CEO Thurmond: regarding the Sheriff's budget, we want to move quickly to that

Z Williams: regarding the Sheriff's office we'd be happy to discuss. If we could, Mr. Sigler could you share the budget for the Sheriff? We will continue to work shoulder to shoulder with Sheriff to meet the needs of the critical functions. The Sheriff requested \$8.9M increase; whether that will be coming from ARP or general budget will be \$11.5M. We are continuing to work through one specific request for a \$2.7M pay increase for personnel in the Sheriff's office; our HR is reviewing with neighboring communities.

-Question LJ: there was a comment I made in request to ERPS regarding the recruitment process and starting pay for the officers. We should look at this holistically for public safety. The strategy is good; I would recommend that we do approve all the items, but have the salary piece go to ERPS so that we can look at this holistically as we move forward to ensure all public safety sees starting salary increases if one department goes up. Let's include this part of the ERPS evaluation

-MDJ: the Sheriff's office is a constitutional office, and does not fall under the ERPS purview. However I agree with the holistic approach; I support what the commissioner and administration stated on the holistic manner; let's also review what other counties are doing. But the Sheriff's salary discussion should come to FAB, not ERPS because it is a constitutional office.

-LJ: once the Sheriff increases, all the other agencies would increase. That's why I stated ERPS

MDJ: I can talk with commissioner Rader and look back on my minutes and see how that was handled

-Z Williams: It's important to note the incentive bonus; by next Friday we will see our public safety employees receive the \$3000 incentives bonus

-LJ: Sheriff is considering starting salaries to ensure they keep their bench moving forward

Z Williams: we look forward to working on that

Sheriff Maddox: as the commissioner stated I am a constitutional officer; I am 137 detention officers down. I have 1500 inmates here. I am 53 deputies down, not to mention the civilian employees I need to ensure these individuals are processed in an expeditious manner. Some employees are leaving and going to Fulton, Henry, and Cobb County because they pay more. We cannot put public safety on hold any longer.

Z Williams: we will continue to work with the Sheriff; a couple of the key points made regarding recruitment and retention; the initial requests of salary did not include the range - we will ensure that is address going forward. The first responders will receive \$3000 and \$2000 for administrative support staff that is in the budget. Then we will address the \$2.7M for salary increases that needs to be fleshed out.

-Question LCJ: I understand; will respect to the administration and the BOC, I don't think a study is necessary to tell us our salaries aren't in line with other jurisdictions. I believe we are the leaders when it comes to addressing crime. As it relates to salary increases, the bonuses was a firm commitment, and we all received the press release; we will not change horses in the middle of the race. We need to take this item by item; there are items in this that we need to move forward as quickly as possible; if there are other questions then we need to state that very quickly. The jail poses issues that we are not at liberty to discuss today. Requests a study of Sheriff's department from the COO.

-CEO Thurmond: there has been no wavering, no second thoughts about this bonus. The bonuses will be paid on July 30 to the same public safety team that we have been supporting the last 5 years. If you would review the recommended proposal

that you have an opportunity to vote on, you will see what was requested

-CEO Thurmond: public safety and its sworn officers who conduct those services will get \$3000. All other employees will receive \$2000. No other commitment has been made.

-Question TT: regarding the relevant agenda items introduced today, if any overlap with OPS, I would ask that we have in the OPS committee to review.

-Question SB: the slide Mr. Sigler discussed answered my question. It's regarding what elements of the budget is the administration asking us to approve? It would be beneficial to have and dissect that information.

Z Williams: we will provide that; we are still reviewing

-LCJ: I move that we approve the \$2000 retention bonuses from the tax funds budget to be paid to non-public safety personnel effective immediately, and to defer the remaining budget amendments for 2 weeks to allow for committee of jurisdiction review

-Second LJ

Vote: yes unanimous

-LJ: Regarding the monumental signs, Sheriff's requests - can you all wait for another couple of weeks for the other portions?

CEO: yes we have time; we want the BOC to have all the time they need to consider. We will certainly consider what the commission does

-Question MDJ: we discussed the retention bonuses in ERPS previously. It seems like it was urgent on the retention and recruitment for the Sheriff; how long has this been going on? This is the first that I'm hearing of urgency within the staffing for the Sheriff's department? 2 weeks from now will be August before we are voting on this. I hope that you would consider a special called meeting in the near future

JR: I appreciate your perspective; this is on the preliminary agenda, and we would look for a substitute; we can have special called meetings in between as necessary

CEO Thurmond: the administration will work to get this to a vote as soon as possible so that we can address issues that are pressing

-LJ: ARP will be heard at the PECS meeting on July 27th

-Commissioner Rader requests Central Staff present the BOC's amendments at the next FAB meeting once committee requests have been made

Meeting Ended At: 12:34PM

MOTION was made by Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, seconded by Larry Johnson, that this agenda item be adjourned meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Rader, and Commissioner Cochran-Johnson

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood CCC, CMC