City of Eatonton Public Hearing
August 4, 2016
9:00 AM
Putnam County Commissioners’ Meeting Room, #203
117 Putnam Drive
Eatonton, Georgia 31024
(706) 485-3311

Proposed City of Eatonton Millage Rate Increase

Elected Officials Present:
Mayor Walter C. Rocker, Jr.
Councilwoman Teresa Doster
Councilman James A. Gorley
Councilman William Mangum, Jr.
Councilwoman Alma Stokes

Elected Officials Absent:
Mayor Pro-Tem Harvey (Chip) Walker, Jr.
Councilman Alvin Butts
Councilman Charles R. Haley

Staff Members Present:
City Administrator, Gary Sanders
City Clerk, Sarah Abrams

Mayor Rocker called the Public Hearing on the Proposed Millage Rate Increase to order at 9:00AM.

Mayor Rocker asked City Administrator Gary Sanders to explain the purpose of the hearing.

City Administrator Sanders advised the purpose of this hearing is to receive comments on the intention to increase the 2016, property taxes. It will levy by 27.24% over the rollback millage rate. For 2016 the City proposes a mill rate of 9.50, which is a 2.034 mill increase over the current rollback rate on 7.466 mills.

The budget tentatively proposed by the Eatonton City Council requires a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate to be able to maintain and continue to provide much needed services to the citizens of the City of Eatonton.

Economic conditions and environmental factors are negatively affecting the level of the Local Option Sales Tax collection in the county. Additionally, the City’s share of the LOST collections (Split with Putnam County) will decline to 31% of the total collections by the year 2020. Since 2013, the new distribution agreement between the City and
Putnam County reduces the City’s portion of LOST collections by 2% each year from 45% in 2013 to 31% in 2020.

Since 2012, the adjusted net digest for the City of Eatonton has declined by 21.9% (from $156,110,321 in 2012 to $121,895,250 in 2016). This includes a 3.2% reduction in Real & Personal Property; a 52.2% reduction in Motor Vehicles; and 401% increase in total exemptions.

Increased services in August 2009, the City received a multi–year federal grant that provided funding to hire full-time firefighters for the Eatonton Fire Department. Since September 2013, the City of Eatonton has maintained the full-time fire department without any federal funding. The City budget $343,000 to operate the fire department for FY 2016. In 2015, the City ISO rating was reduced from 7 to 4.

Before the Eatonton City Council may finalize the tentative budget and set the final millage rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase

Mayor Rocker asked if any one signed to speak.

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Gorley to hear comments from all persons signed in to speak. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

Public Comments: Tom Thompson, 103 Greensboro Road, Eatonton, GA.

Mr. Tom Thompson discussed his farm land being annex into the City back in the 80’s and the impact this acquisition has made on his taxes. Mr. Thompson suggested Council should reduce the cost of government and look at combining the City and County governments.

Mayor Rocker closed the Public Hearing at 9:10 AM

Motion was made by Gorley and seconded by Doster to adjourn. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

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Walter C. Rocker, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

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Sarah E. Abrams