



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
OXFORD CITY HALL
WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024
Budget Public Hearing**

PRESENT: David S. Eady, Mayor; Councilmembers: James Windham, Laura McCanless, George Holt, Mike Ready, Jeff Wearing

Staff members present: City Manager Bill Andrew, City Clerk/Treasurer Marcia Brooks, Police Chief Mark Anglin, Superintendent of Utilities and Maintenance Jody Reid

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

The public hearing was called to order at 6:03 PM by Mayor David S. Eady. The purpose of the public hearing was to receive written and oral comments on the proposed FY 2025 Operational Budget, FY 2025 Capital Budget, FY 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan, and FY 2025 Special Revenue Budget.

No oral or written comments were provided from the public. The City Councilmembers present discussed several issues related to the proposed budgets.

Mayor Eady stated that his proposal is to add the amount of the deficit to property tax revenue to balance the budget and take appropriate action to set the millage rate to close the gap once the City receives the 2024 property tax documents from the Newton County Property Tax Commissioner. He expects property valuation increases to cover a portion of this and increase the millage rate to cover the difference.

Jim Windham stated he would vote for a property tax increase only if some other things are included such as not adding any personnel with a new system being implemented and changing the chain of command in the charter to place the City Manager over all staff. He believes the problems the new positions would address could easily be handled by staff or the City Manager or by bringing outside people in. Laura McCanless concurred with this. He does not think property taxes should be the sole revenue source to move toward making the General Fund self-sufficient.

Mayor Eady provided property tax revenue amounts for previous years to demonstrate that there has not been much difference in property taxes collected between 2007 and 2023. He contended that this line item would already be generating more revenue if the millage rate had been increased incrementally over the years to provide for the increasing cost of running the City. His proposal would result in a maximum of about 1.5 mils increase over last year's millage rate. Mr. Windham and Ms. McCanless also expressed concern about residents asking them why their taxes keep going up.

Mayor Eady stated he had not spoken with anyone who was asking that question. He asked the City Councilmembers to refer this question to him and he would be glad to speak with them. The City has not increased property taxes, but the valuation of their homes has increased.

Ms. McCanless understood Mayor Eady's points and that the City is having difficulty meeting its needs but felt uneasy forecasting property tax revenue in such a positive light.

Mayor Eady expressed the need to have the Tax Assessor's office correctly classify the properties in the City that should not be tax exempt, or to negotiate a PILOT agreement with Emory University.

Jeff Wearing asked if we could increase our revenue from sales tax. Mayor Eady pointed out that sales tax goes to the state, and the City receives its apportionment according to agreed upon percentages with the county and municipalities. New businesses would result in a slight increase in LOST revenue. New businesses would also increase some other types of tax revenue.

Mayor David Eady adjourned the public hearing at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer