

**MINUTES OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA, HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2014, IN THE COMMISSION MEETING ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE, LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, 124 BULL STREET, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Albert J. Scott called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. on Tuesday, June 17, 2014.

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**II. INVOCATION**

No invocation was given.

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**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Scott said, I ask that our Commission Pro Tem, Commissioner from the 1<sup>st</sup> District lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Would everyone please stand.

Commissioner Stone led all in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman Scott said, thank you.

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**OPENING REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Chairman Scott said, good morning and welcome. This is the first of our public hearings that we're going to conduct to keep us in compliance with all applicable state laws. The Chatham County Board of Commission announced publicly its intent to decrease property taxes it will levy this year by 1.9 percent under the rollback millage rate for General Maintenance and Operation taxes, and increase by .58 percent over the rollback millage rate for the Special Service District taxes, and 1.63 percent over the rollback millage rate for the Chatham Area Transit Authority. The purpose of this hearing is to provide the members of the public an opportunity to comment.

Chairman Scott said, the advertised millage rate for the General Fund is 11.543 mills, which is 0.224 mills lower than the calculated rollback rate of 11.767. The advertised millage rate for the Special Service District Fund is 4.13 mills, which is 0.024 mill higher than the calculated rollback rate of 4.106 mills. The advertised millage rate for Chatham County Area Transit Authority is 1 mill, which is 0.016 mill higher than the calculated rollback rate of 0.984 mills.

Chairman Scott said, now, we have a list at the front of the room for anybody who wish to comment. Please if you would provide us your name and address on that list, and we will recognize those as they sign in. If this -- this will allow us to document the public input, and so we do ask if you have comments, please sign in. We also ask that, it will depend on the number of people, whether or not we will limit the time. We will ask that you be brief and -- and as concise as you possibly can. And with that, everybody who wish to sign in, please do so.

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**IV. ROLL CALL** (Introduction of Youth Commission members present)

Chairman Scott said, now at this time I will ask the Clerk to please call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present:                 Albert J. Scott, Chairman  
                               Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas, Vice Chairman, District Eight  
                               Helen L. Stone, Chairman Pro Tem, District One  
                               James J. Holmes, District Two  
                               Tony Center, District Three

Yusuf K. Shabazz, District Five  
Lori L. Brady, District Six

Also present: Lee Smith, County Manager  
Janice Bocook, County Clerk

Not present: Patrick K. Farrell, District Four  
Dean Kicklighter, District Seven

Also not present: R. Jonathan Hart, County Attorney

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## V. PUBLIC HEARING AS REQUIRED BY THE STATE ON THE COUNTY'S 2014 MILLAGE LEVY

**The first and second hearings are being held today. The third hearing will be held on June 27, 2014, at 9:30 A.M.**

Chairman Scott said, okay. Mr. Kaigler, could you -- could I see you a minute, please? Okay. Have -- do we have a list of individuals who which -- wish to speak?

Ms. Barbara Foley said, we wish to speak, but we're not on the list but we want to speak.

Chairman Scott said, okay. The list is right up front.

Assistant County Manager Linda Cramer said, anyone else?

Chairman Scott said, okay. Thank you so much. Okay. We'll start with Brandon Baines of the Coastal Georgia Council of Boy Scouts.

Mr. Brandon Baines said, good morning, my name Brandon Baines. I work with the Coastal Georgia Boy Scouts. I'm an Atlantic District Executive, and throughout Chatham County we serve 2100 intercity youth, at risk youth, and the term at risk comes from kids that are below the poverty level or come from a single parent home. We work with 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the Board of Education, and we're trying to expand that program, and we're trying to add 200 youth a year and five sites a year through 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We're also losing grant money every year. We're losing about \$30,000 from -- just from the United Way alone. So we really need this extra grant money to keep expanding this program and keep reaching these youth. We're putting these youth in a fun environment with positive adult role models, and we're teaching the values of the scout oath and the scout law. We're teaching them how to live by these values. And I was talking to Chief -- Assistant Police Chief Terry Enoch the other day. He said the schools are a direct pipeline to our jail, and we're trying to prevent that. We're a preventive organization. We try to reach these kids before they make the bad decisions. We try to help them -- give them the choice to let them know they can be better, they can overcome, they can achieve, and they can excel. And I'm going to bring up Ms. Barbara Foley. She's going to talk a little about the Exploring program.

Ms. Barbara Foley said, good morning.

Members of the Board collectively said, good morning.

Ms. Foley said, my name is Barbara Foley, and thank you for allowing us to be here this morning. I've been with the Boy Scout Council here in Savannah for 10 years, running two of their three outreach subsidiary programs, the Explorer Post and Learning for Life, and Exploring and Learning for Life are co-educational programs so boys and girls benefit for these -- from these programs. They are -- most of them are in conjunction with the Savannah-Chatham Public School System, and our partnerships with various local organizations, businesses and agencies in the Savannah-Chatham area, including Gulfstream, Memorial, St. Joseph's/Candler, the Hussey, Gay, Bell & DeYoung engineering firm, etcetera, and they -- these programs focus on values and positive character development and career and education programs. Exploring and Learning for Life are volunteer supported to a large degree, but we do have -- it's a very labor intensive program, as is the Scout Reach program that Brandon [Baines] talked about. These programs require our constant supervision to make sure that they are being delivered properly. We have curriculum that needs to be followed and approved activities and the partnerships are constantly having to be renewed and the relationships developed. So because of this, we do also have to hire paraprofessionals to run the Scout Reach programs at the centers. So, this is a -- a very labor intensive program, but we have a -- a strong dedication to it. We feel that scouting with it's 104 year history of developing leaders and strong citizens for our country has a lot to offer to our community and our youth. Thank you very much, and I'm going to turn this over to Matt [Spencer] to finish up.

Mr. Matt Spencer said, good morning. I'm Matt Spencer. I'm the resource development director for the Boy Scouts here in Savannah, and I just have a couple of talking points to explain why we really need this money and what we do, and I'm kind of the money guy in the Council. Basically our budget, we cover 21 counties. We

just inherited the south end of the coast, all the way from basically the Florida line to Brunswick, and we've had that last -- we just got that March, but now we literally have the entire coast from South Carolina to Florida, so we're serving over 21 counties now. Last year at this time we were only serving 11 here in Chatham County and surrounding counties. That's about a \$1.2 million budget, which sounds like a lot, but we service about 7500 youth in that amount of money and about 1700 kids, adult leaders, volunteers throughout this whole territory that we're dealing with. The Scout Reach budget -- the Scout Reach budget just for Chatham County, which most of our Scout Reach is here, about those 600 kids that Brandon [Baines] talked about, we have a budget of about \$120,000 to do that, and that's about 10 percent of our total budget.

Mr. Spencer said, that sounds real great, we got a lot to do that, but unfortunately, most of our funding comes from United Way, and I'm going to explain a little bit, at no fault to United Way or ourselves, but the history facts have been just in the last three years, three years ago Chatham County United Way and the surrounding United Ways, we have about five of them all together, most of them are Chatham County, we were getting \$130,500 towards Scout Reach and our -- all our general programming. In 2013 that dropped to 102,000. In 2014, that dropped to \$75,000. That's equivalent to about -- we -- we say it take's \$150 to put a kid through scouting for one year. You take that loss of 55,000 plus dollars, that's about 100 -- about 375 youth. Out of that 600, that's what we will not be funding. The important thing to say we're still servicing those 600 youth even though we lost that. What we need to do and anticipate with that loss, and it's no fault of ours or United Way's, there's just too many people demanding the money from the United Way and other organizations. As you all know, people like us are always coming in trying to -- to -- to find sources for that. When you lose \$55,000, in just three years -- by the way 25 years ago United Way funded 52 percent of our budget. They're funding 10 percent now just because they can't fund anymore. There are so many more organizations. So with that, in three years, we've -- we've lost that many. We anticipate that 10,000 to \$15,000 drop again this year from the United Way for 2015, so you can see it's less and less. What that does for us? Like me, I had to spend more of my valuable resources, time, energy and volunteers raising that money, and not doing what we're really designed to do and our mission, to serve kids in a quality scouting program. So what we're looking at is the \$25,000 request that we have in for your group is to help us get some of that funding back so not only can we help those 375, by the way, \$25,000 would fund about 166 kids for one year, we want to grow the program. We can't do it without -- if we have to keep finding more and more money. We would love to have United Way help us more, excuse me, but we -- we know that that's a dwindling source for income. So with that, we know you would help alleviate that, and that's why we're here today. I don't know if there are any questions or not, but I want to thank you for that and go from there. Thank you.

Chairman Scott said, I think we have a question for you.

Mr. Spencer said, yes, sir.

Commissioner Shabazz said, yes. Good morning.

Mr. Spencer said, good morning.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Shabazz from the 5<sup>th</sup> District and then Commissioner Center from the 3<sup>rd</sup> District.

Commissioner Shabazz said, your total operating budget is how much?

Mr. Spencer said, 1.2 million for 22 counties.

Commissioner Shabazz said, and how much of that goes toward programming for the youth, and how much of that goes toward salaries?

Mr. Spencer said, about -- the -- the way we looked at it and actually in your packet there's a brochure, it's a little orange one in there. About 86 cents of every dollar is spent on program. The other 13 percent -- 14 -- 12 to 13 percent is spent on keeping the lights on, insurance, administrative costs. So that's kind of how we look at it, about 86 percent of that, or 86 cents of every dollar goes to programming. Of the Scout Reach program that I talked about that we have about 10 percent of our total budget, \$100,000, \$120,000 actually is what we use for the Scout Reach program just for at risk youth that Brandon [Baines] talked about.

Commissioner Shabazz said, so that's full-time folks or part-time folk or what?

Mr. Spencer said, for the staff that we have, it is full-time. Brandon is one of our full-time people that work there. We actually have full-time, we have about 14 of us that are full-time including clerical support.

Commissioner Shabazz said, so how much money goes towards salaries for that 14 individuals?

Mr. Spencer said, in that 13 -- that 13 percent of that is about salary and lights and business, so --

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. But I'm saying in terms of dollar amount?

Mr. Spencer said, thirteen -- well, 10 -- 10 percent of a million dollars is 100,000. That would be about -- about \$900,000 helps to staffing and benefits and that kind of thing that we do and also for the programming. Up to -- to make the program happen. Does that -- am I answering your question?

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. I just wanted to know.

Mr. Spencer said, yep.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Center of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District.

Commissioner Center said, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I have some other questions, but let me follow up on Commissioner Shabazz. I'm looking at your agency budget, salaries, employee benefits, payroll taxes adds up to about 700,000, and your total proposed revenue is 1.2 million. How does that get to be 13 percent?

Mr. Spencer said, if -- if you want --

Commissioner Center said, that's more than 50 percent going to salaries.

Mr. Spencer said, well, when you pull the orange brochure out that we -- that we have in there, that kind of breaks that piece of pie out for -- for you. Because what we consider Brandon [Baines] doing is part of programs, and -- and that's the way the Boy Scouts of America figures it out, so a lot of -- my -- my salary, what they pay me, I'm -- I'm not considered program, but Brandon is in the field seven days a week, that's what he does, so part of that salary breaks out differently that way. So when we put these together for United Way, that's how they break that out, and that's what we use -- and this is what we use with the United Way and the Boy Scouts -- this is what we use for United Way when we break out their salaries, too -- I mean under all their income.

Commissioner Center said, has the United Way told you why they are lowering?

Mr. Spencer said, yes, they -- they -- they have. It's -- there's such a demand for -- there's so many organizations they're trying to fund. Twenty-five years ago they didn't have as many organizations they were funding, so organizations like the Boy Scouts were getting 50, 52 percent of their budget to -- towards that. Because there's so many people coming after that now, they do not have the -- the money -- even though they're raising a lot of money, it's nothing -- our proposals are fine, there's no issue there, we're serving the right amount of kids, they just basically -- they have -- they have too much -- too many people asking for it and not enough money to go around.

Commissioner Center said, okay. Are y'all part of the Boy Scouts of America?

Mr. Spencer said, we are, the national organization. Correct.

Commissioner Center said, and have -- have the political implications in the last few months been any reason for people cutting their sources?

Mr. Spencer said, there's been some -- in Savannah, in Chatham County, we are very well supported in what we do. It was the national organization, there were some issues we had across the country, but it really hasn't affected what we do here. We're actually -- our membership is up. We're in the top ten percent in the country of membership being up, which is good, so we're not affected there. Also, our fund raising has been up only because they brought someone like myself in to -- oh, sorry, most organizations don't have that, but because we're losing money that's what I do. So it's helped find more funding.

Commissioner Center said, and are you free to disregard some of those decisions and do what you want on the local level?

Mr. Spencer said, no, we're not -- we have to follow the guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America. They tell us what we can and cannot do.

Commissioner Center said, all right. Thank you.

Mr. Spencer said, mm-hmm.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Stone from the 1<sup>st</sup> District has a question.

Mr. Spencer said, yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Stone said, thank you. Do you -- when you said you work with the kids at risk, is there a certain program -- I'm sorry, I'm -- did I misunderstand?

Mr. Spencer said, yes, I think Brandon [Baines] might have just -- one of our big ones, we work with -- at risk is considered -- is the low income poverty level and the -- it varies from all over the county, but the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - let me bring Brian -- Brandon up, 'cause it's 21<sup>st</sup> Century program. Brandon just give a little bit more information.

Mr. Baines said, all right.

Commissioner Stone said, I guess where I'm going is kids that might be at risk, once they've enter your program --

Mr. Baines said, we teach them things like safe swim defense, fire safety, first aid, wilderness skills. We teach them, like, stuff that they would typically not learn in the classroom, life skills that they can take with them, and we'll teach them CPR and stuff like that.

Commissioner Stone said, but I'm -- I guess my question is -- is that are we helping kids that might have gone on the wrong track --

Mr. Baines said, yes, one of the --

Commissioner Stone said, -- through any of your programs?

Mr. Baines said, one of the programs I work with is actually Fresh Start, and these are kids who have kind of gone down the wrong track, and they've -- that's the only school who will take them here in Chatham County, and Mr. Ken -- Mr. Dekel and Mr. Ford, specifically request that I work with those kids because the values of the scout oath and the scout law -- the scout law is scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. If you live your life by those, if you hear those every day, if you can hold yourself to a higher standard, you're going to take that back home, and you're going to hold your family and your friends to a higher standard. Because you, you know, who you run with is who you're going to -- if you're running with a bad gang, that's the path you're going to take. If you're running with us, you know, Boy Scouts are more likely to go to college and get scholarships and become successful.

Commissioner Stone said, okay. I -- I was just curious what programs you have --

Mr. Baines said, yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Stone said, -- for kids that were at risk.

Mr. Baines said, and just with 21<sup>st</sup> Century I serve 200 youth, and I go into the schools and take my paraprofessionals in and we work with these kids every week.

Commissioner Stone said, thank you.

Mr. Spencer said, it's basically the same -- same program that we do for our other youth. The problem is in the Scout Reach program, I don't have the parents. I don't have the parents I do in the traditional program if you will. We don't have as many so we have to bring in the paraprofessionals which is part of what we talked about, in that we have to pay someone to -- some of them are just not going to do that, and we've committed that no kid will not be allowed to go through scouting because of income or whatever. Well that includes providing leadership, and that's a very expensive proposition but not -- the for profit world probably wouldn't do it, the non-profits, though, we do do that, and we have -- at any one time we'll have four or five paraprofessionals that go in, and they're the acting moms and dads of the group if you will, and -- and the pot -- the -- the -- the adult leadership changes almost monthly at the Scout Reach program level so we had to put in a set program that does what -- they can become an eagle scout. We actually have Scout Reach youth that have become eagle scouts, which only four out of 100 will actually make because they hit all the other conflicts that you get, you know, when they get young men. They get sports, cars, girls, all these jobs, all these things get in the way of a young man from the ages of 11 to 16, 17 who would be in the program. We're trying to go out and reach those kids. We've done 600 of them very, very successfully.

Commissioner Stone said, thank you.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Brady from the 6<sup>th</sup> District.

Commissioner Brady said, I was writing notes about the loss of revenue --

Mr. Spencer said, mm-hmm. Yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Brady said, -- for the organization, and you said \$55,000 in probably three years is what I picked up.

Mr. Spencer said, just the United Way, yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Brady said, from the United Way Fund, and you're asking the County for 25,000. Well, if I take the 55,000 and subtract the 25,000, where are you going to get the other 30,000?

Mr. Spencer said, well, that -- what -- prior to even coming to here, we go out and do other fundraising activities that I use strictly just for the Scout Reach program, and that's what I've brought to the piece of the puzzle. We actually do other fundraising. The United Way is down. We ask our families to contribute. We ask businesses

and corporations. We're actually two blocks down the road going to be throwing any and everyone off the building, the Manger Building, as a fundraiser, and we call it Over the Edge. We raised \$42,000 last year to do that. And, so -- oh, we want all of you will do that. But we also do -- I do auctions. We do golf tournaments. Everything that normal organizations would do we do. We just try and do it better.

Commissioner Brady said, well, and you talk about the parapros in reference to the at risk youth program. Have you ever considered -- and I -- and I understand the -- the problems with lack of parental support for -- for that -- for those groups of children, but have you ever considered maybe have -- trying to contract, you know, have them sign the -- have a parent sign a contract where they have to volunteer a certain amount of hours?

Mr. Spencer said, right.

Commissioner Brady said, I mean they do it in the school system like at Oglethorpe Charter School is an example where they have to sign a contract and they have to do certain hours of -- of work at the school. Have -- have you ever considered doing something like that?

Mr. Spencer said, we have done that to a degree. Again, our success rate because some of the -- has not been the best because when -- we contract those parents to do that, but when they -- when the economy hits the way it is, they're gone. We don't have them any more. The contract's only good as long as they're in the area. So -- and a lot of these families, unfortunately, they're -- they're -- they're -- if there's two parents there, they're working two and three jobs sometimes. It's hard to get them to commit to it. So, we've tried it. Brandon's [Baines] had some success with that. We found out the parapros tends to be a little better. Of course, they don't -- we don't pay parapros hardly anything. They kind of do it for resume experience and that kind of thing, but -- but we have done that a little bit, it's just hard to keep that parent around.

Commissioner Brady said, and my last question would be for -- for -- for the County Manager. Well, have we ever funded anything like this for Boy Scouts of America?

County Manager Lee Smith said, we don't think so. That's what I was asking Linda [Cramer.] I don't believe so. No. No, ma'am.

Mr. Spencer said, I think last year was the first year that we -- we talked with Helen Stone, and she suggested that we probably do something like this. We're also working with the City and a lot of other organizations, but we -- that's why we're coming to you now, to -- to see if it's something that we can start a tradition with.

Commissioner Brady said, has the City of Savannah committed to any funding?

Mr. Spencer said, last year they did not. We're resubmitting. Barbara [Foley] is my proposal writer, and she -- we're resubmitting -- they said resubmit. Again, they had so many people pulling at them they just -- they had to make a decision, and so we feel real good that they're going to help fund, maybe do something cooperatively with this. We have a lot of people that do do matching. We have some groups in town that -- that will match as we raise money as well.

Commissioner Brady said, thank you.

Mr. Spencer said, so it's very much needed. Thank you.

Chairman Scott said, thank you. One -- one last comment here from Commissioner Shabazz from the 5<sup>th</sup> District.

Commissioner Shabazz said, well, whether we agree to --

Mr. Spencer said, he's looking at my Over the Edge card.

Commissioner Shabazz said, yeah. Whether we -- whether we agree or not to give you funding --

Mr. Spencer said, I'll still throw you over the edge.

Commissioner Shabazz said, right. Right. I'm saying, I -- I may interested in this Over the Edge.

Mr. Spencer said, folks back there my not know what that is, but I'm -- I'm -- this is my event. It's excellent, and we actually -- it was great. We can do that. It's the Manger Building right down the street.

Commissioner Shabazz said, right. So tell me more about that.

Mr. Spencer said, well, what we do is it's -- it's -- it's doing a golf tournament on the side of a building basically. It -- it -- it -- the fundraiser is you have to raise enough money to have someone send you over the building, over the edge, and we open it up to -- we actually have a program, actually the United Way may participate. We have a revenue sharing program. Not only are we trying to raise money, we don't keep all the money. We're trying to give some of our money out by asking our -- our non-profits, certain ones, that if they raise \$1,000, the first 1,000 will go to help do the fundraiser and pay for the program. The next \$1,000 100 percent goes to that

organization, non-profit. Anything after that is 50/50 split. Now if you're thinking about that, it's 50/50 all the way around, we just dictate where the first few dollars go. What we basically do is take you to the Manger Building. We train you. We teach you what you got to do. We have this -- there's a company come in, they'll actually harness you up; they'll set you on the end of that rope, and you'll just go over the edge, and it takes you 12 minutes unless you panic to go over. And we sent 89 over. I know my two media are going to go over. WTOC actually helped sponsor it last year, and -- and if you can raise the money -- I have -- my biggest fundraiser, one gentleman, a lawyer in town, raised \$5800 for it.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay.

Mr. Spencer said, so -- but we'd send all of you. We'll actually have a media kickoff you'll be all invited to, Barbara [Foley] -- but we can go in the building and look to see where you're going to jump. So, that's just one of the new fundraisers I do.

Commissioner Shabazz said, so I can call you at this number?

Mr. Spencer said, you sure can.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. Thank you.

Mr. Spencer said, and Barbara [Foley] will be calling you now anyway, so -- you --

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay.

Mr. Spencer said, you're -- you know, you're District's going to be in there.

Commissioner Shabazz said, all right.

Chairman Scott said, our -- our vice Chair looks like she's interested in it too.

Commissioner Thomas said, (shook head negatively.)

Mr. Spencer said, I'm not thinking that. We tried to get the Mayor to go. She has kind of refused to go, but we'll -- we'll get someone to jump.

Chairman Scott said, okay.

Commissioner Shabazz said, let -- let me ask you one more thing. Do you all partner with any other non-profit organization like the Y or the Boys Club or --

Mr. Spencer said, we -- we do, and Brandon [Baines] -- especially in our Scout Reach.

Commissioner Shabazz said, Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Baines said, Prime Time.

Mr. Spencer said, yeah. Prime Time, we -- we partner with Prime Time; 21<sup>st</sup> Century, of course, is a program that's run in all the schools; and then, of course, YMCA; Boys and Girls Club we have a couple programs, not necessarily all in Chatham, but we are -- like I said, we're in 21 counties now. So we do try and partner -- we'll partner with just about anybody that wants us to help them give a good program, and, of course, our churches are our number one sponsors in the entire area. So, yes, we do.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. thank you. Thank you.

Chairman Scott said, one -- one last question. Of the number of kids that you reach, how many are in Chatham County?

Mr. Spencer said, Brandon [Baines], of our 600? Almost all of them. He'll give the exact number.

Mr. Baines said, the -- the total of 2100, is all in Chatham County. That's including the Scout Reach, Exploring, and Learning for Life. So it's 2100 youth that we reach here in Savannah area.

Mr. Spencer said, and it's those 600 you see --

Mr. Baines said, 600 are just Scout Reach. The other 21 --

Mr. Spencer said, right here in Chatham County.

Mr. Baines said, yeah.

Mr. Spencer said, we're sitting right in the heart of it.

Mr. Baines said, yes.

Chairman Scott said, thank you.

Mr. Spencer said, mm-hmm. Thank you.

Chairman Scott said, mm-hmm. Ms. Cort Atkinson.

Ms. Cort Atkinson said, good morning.

Members of the Commission collectively said, good morning.

Ms. Atkinson said, thank you for allowing me to come talk with you. My name is Cort Atkinson, and I am the CEO of Ocean Exchange. We're an organization that started in Savannah, created in Savannah. Four years ago we had our first Board of Governors meeting, and Chatham County was one of our supporters in year one, 2011 and 2012 of Ocean Exchange. I'm going to explain to you little bit about who we are, what we do, and why we're important, and then talk a little bit about what -- why we are here. Ocean Exchange, our mission is to accelerate the adoption of innovations that improve environment, economies and health around the world. We focus on a -- what that means is we have created here a global platform. Ocean Exchange, when it was formed was formed as a global organization, and we have a team that searches around the world for cutting edge innovations and registers them on our -- in our gallery. We have two worldwide sponsors which are Gulstream and Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics, both significant employers here in -- in our county, and they have offered two \$100,000 awards for these innovators -- for the best innovators. What that allows us to do is reach out and connect with innovators all over the world that are creating certain -- these types of innovations relative to environment, economies and health. We -- to get an innovator to register, you have to touch them 10 times 'cause they're busy working on what they're doing. So we get these great innovators to register in our gallery, and we then reach out and we have a global review panel that looks at these innovations and selects the top ten innovations to come to Savannah to present their solution to our selected guests.

Ms. Atkinson said, these innovations -- innovators, when we are interested in them, they have a working prototype of a solution and they can be very, very diverse. Our Board of Governors then reaches out and invites individuals from around the world in business, from universities and from non-profits to come to Ocean Exchange and meet these innovators. In addition they invite major corporations to come and present about what they're -- they're working on relative to whatever the theme is. Our theme for 2014 is accelerate sustainability. Our Board has the freedom to select a theme for looking for innovations each year, ensuring that the types of solutions that are coming to Savannah and that are registered on our gallery are ones that are really relevant to what's going on in the world today. Why is this important for Chatham County? The reason why this is important to -- to Chatham County is this -- we are creating what I would call the intellectual port for the southeast, but connecting the southeast to the world all relative to cutting edge innovations whether those are coming from industry or from entrepreneurs. We're uniquely situated because we don't have a huge research operation here which allows us to be that hub which pulls from Georgia Tech, MIT, Plymouth University, universities in Hong Kong, all come to Savannah to present -- to see these solutions, to connect with one another and then to do great work.

Ms. Atkinson said, we have an event once a year where we bring these individuals together, and as a result of that, each year we continue to expand our network. So right now we have a global network of -- at inno -- innovation advocates, the number is 450. This year we'll bring another 150. Some will be repeats and probably about 50 to 70 will be new. They will come to Savannah, experience -- have this experience in Savannah, make connections in Savannah, and then they continue to work with each other. As a result of that there are immediate things that happen that -- that provides a great opportunity for any of the economic development arms across the southeast to come and meet these innovators from around the world, and these innovative businesses and -- and work with them shoulder to shoulder for two days and they go -- they continue to go off and work. So what we do is provide that opportunity for these connections to be made, and what it ends up doing is you'll have a presenter that came last year, left and has -- is on the verge of securing funding to actually bring their innovation into Georgia, but we also are -- are benefitting many other locations as well. It really is a demonstrated program that -- that drives success and drives success -- it's creating a whole new platform for Chatham County relative to innovations that are positive for businesses and collaborative innovation.

Ms. Atkinson said, in addition, we have one other thing, is we have an internship program. Because of the caliber of the types of solutions that we're bringing to the table, our internship program is at the college level, and we have representatives from Smithsonian and National Geographic who work with interns here in Savannah for a four- to eight- week period where they actually create information about these solutions. So they sort of -- they have this opportunity to work with cutting edge solutions and use their talents to help communicate about them globally.

Chairman Scott said, okay. We have some questions. Commissioner Center from the 3<sup>rd</sup> District and then Commissioner Brady from the 6<sup>th</sup> District.

Commissioner Center said, thank you Ms. Atkinson. Good morning.

Ms. Atkinson said, good morning.

Commissioner Center said, when you talk about people bring working prototypes, is it the idea this working prototypes will eventually be money makers?

Ms. Atkinson said, they are. Yes, they do.

Commissioner Center said, so this is basically an economic opportunity?

Ms. Atkinson said, yes.

Commissioner Center said, so is at some point they'll be making money and you won't be asking for tax funds?

Ms. Atkinson said, yes.

Commissioner Center said, when do you anticipate that?

Ms. Atkinson said, I would actually see the -- the typical trajectory for an organization like this is that we are completely self-sufficient in ten years.

Commissioner Center said, all right.

Ms. Atkinson said, it could -- because it just takes time for those innovators to then re-invest, etcetera. We actually on an on-going basis, I am talking to businesses around the world about becoming sponsors of Ocean Exchange. So, you know, the strength of Ocean Exchange is going to be on the number of global businesses that we engage to come here to entertain. So -- like Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics, when they come this year, they are bringing some of their major customers with them to Ocean Exchange to Chatham County to experience.

Commissioner Center said, I love the idea. It's very fascinating. Just looking at public funds. You said that the Commission gave you money three years ago, the 2011-2012 budget. How much was that?

Ms. Atkinson said, 25,000 each year.

Commissioner Center said, we -- we did it for how many years?

Ms. Atkinson said, for two years. Last year we did not come and ask for funds because last year we, under the direction of our Board, were -- really went through Ocean Exchange and focused on identifying all those core components that were really going to make us provide value as a, you know, a port for innovation for Chatham County, and so we were, you know, getting rid of things that weren't adding value and getting focused on building the gallery and doing all these things. So we were -- since we were in transition, I did not come to ask for money because I'd be saying, well, this is where we're going. Now I can just -- I can come and chat with you and I can say this is where we are. We've built this platform; it's working.

Commissioner Center said, thank you.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Brady.

Commissioner Brady said, good morning. I've listened to you very intently here and you talked about that you have demonstrated programs of success and -- and you're providing opportunities for people to come together. Do you have like dues-paying members? Like, in other words, you have these organizations that are all wanting to be a part of this. You've been organized for four years, I mean, normally organizations like that, and -- and I -- I'll just use an example of, you talked about industry folks, normally, they would be like a -- you know, pay a -- a -- due -- dues on an annual basis to -- to fund your budget. Do you have any of that?

Ms. Atkinson said, yes, we do. The organizations that are fund -- that contribute to us as sponsors are Gulfstream, obviously and Wallenius Wilhelmsen, Georgia Ports Authority, Southern Company, World Trade Center and Convention Center, yourselves as well, and we also have four or five what I call business -- individual business leaders that are sponsors, and we are continually working to grow that sponsorship.

Commissioner Brady said, have you ever made a request for any support from -- from say the Chamber of Commerce who, you know, works on bringing people together for the business community?

Ms. Atkinson said, we have not made a request of the Chamber.

Commissioner Stone said, SEDA.

Commissioner Brady said, excuse me?

Commissioner Stone said, SEDA.

Commissioner Brady said, SEDA.

Ms. Atkinson said, yes, SEDA is a sponsor, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Brady said, okay.

Ms. Atkinson said, I apologize.

Commissioner Brady said, okay.

Ms. Atkinson said, yes. And SEDA when -- when we started, SEDA watched us for two years. While you were wonderful and stepped forward and said, you know, this sounds interesting, let us help you, SEDA said let us watch and see what you can do, and then this past year they have stepped forward with \$50,000 worth of funding for us. So, they like what we are doing.

Commissioner Brady said, what about colleges and universities? Do they offer you any type of funding?

Ms. Atkinson said, no. I -- I haven't found that to be a successful source of funding for us other than they sent delegates to Ocean Exchange. So we have a significant number of universities that participate by sending their research faculty to Ocean Exchange to meet these innovators and then they go off and -- and put in for grants and things like that. So we're helping those universities.

Commissioner Brady said, thank you.

Chairman Scott said, okay. Any further questions?

Commissioner Stone said, I have one question. Can you --

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Stone from the 1<sup>st</sup> District.

Commissioner Stone said, thank you. Can you give us just for the people that are listening, an example -- couple of examples of some of these innovations that are interesting and that have helped this community and help tie this community with members of -- all around the world.

Ms. Atkinson said, okay. In the first year a innovation came that won the Gulfstream award. It was called the Wave Glider by Liquid Robotics. It was -- it's a small surfboard-like device that is propelled based on wave energy. When they came to Ocean Exchange, the delegates looked at what they were doing, said it was fabulous but said they needed to be able to go the distance, demonstrate that they could run -- operate for long distances and that they needed to pay attention on the importance of collecting ocean data, which has become even more important in the last three years. With the money that they received at Ocean Exchange, they went and hosted their own PacX Challenge where they built four Wave Gliders and dropped them off the coast in California and two went to Japan and two went to Australia collecting data. What this -- and that broke all types of world records. What this demonstrated was that they had built devices -- the capability of building a device that you could put in the water and remote control send anywhere to collect data. So, from there they started to have to do more and more tests, and our network that we assemble, we start pinging them, and they helped Wave Glider get into to tests in the Great Lake, tests in the marine sanctuaries through the work with Dan Bosta (phonetic) and our Gray's Reef Sanctuaries Group, and then this past year they have just received a huge contract with NOAA to monitor the marine sanctuaries globally. So from a standpoint -- from a global standpoint -- national standpoint, what this is allowing NOAA to do is to more effectively monitor and collect information in the ocean while reducing their -- their budget expense, which impacts our Gray's Reef Group here as well. But it's not just limited to that. We have other devices that have -- have come. We had an agricultural solution which was a closed set agricultural solution which then when they came to Ocean Exchange, they made connections here and the -- our Economic -- our Georgia Economic Development group met with them, made introductions for them, and those introductions are going really, really well, and they are -- they potentially will be opening up operations here in Georgia as well. So -- so it can be agriculture, it can be ocean based. I -- I can -- I can keep going. We have so many great --

Commissioner Stone said, that's all right. I just wanted for -- for the benefit of everybody here to give a couple of examples. I think I was at your awards banquet with the wave runner.

Ms. Atkinson said, mm-hmm.

Commissioner Stone said, and it was just truly fascinating, and then seeing the whole networking of people from all over the world here to exchange ideas. So I just wanted you to give an example.

Ms. Atkinson said, and the true benefit to organizations in Chatham County is they don't have to hop on a plane or go anywhere. It happens here. And so they just -- they can register and see not only these innovations and meet these top cutting edge innovative companies and make connections and then do business with them. Ocean Exchange, all we do is create an amazing platform to connect people to new business, and our focus is on the most innovative. So it can only do good things for any business that is here.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Shabazz from the 5<sup>th</sup> District has a question.

Commissioner Shabazz said, yes. Good morning.

Ms. Atkinson said, good morning.

Commissioner Shabazz said, I'm listening to you and you sound very impressive. Can you give us -- or give me -- what -- what's your background?

Ms. Atkinson said, I had spent about 30 years in consulting. So I started in figuring out -- compensation consulting. How do you pay people, what should their jobs be, how should they work to work force strategy, then on to business strategy. What are the types of innovations and technologies that businesses need in order to compete and win and then on to brand strategy. So that's my background.

Commissioner Shabazz said, do you have credentials? Are you an engineer? Are you a scientist? What -- what are you?

Ms. Atkinson said, actually, I'm just a -- a -- a meek math major.

Commissioner Shabazz said, math major?

Ms. Atkinson said, that then started working in a consulting firm and -- and worked their way up -- her way up to partner.

Commissioner Shabazz said, are you from Savannah?

Ms. Atkinson said, no, I'm not. My husband's from Savannah.

Commissioner Shabazz said, are you from Chatham County?

Ms. Atkinson said, I am from Chatham County.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. Good.

Ms. Atkinson said, I love Chatham County. I lived in Atlanta for 30 years --

Commissioner Shabazz said, right.

Ms. Atkinson said, -- and consulted from there across the -- all the major organizations in the southeast and also internationally.

Commissioner Shabazz said, one last question. Where are you housed at?

Ms. Atkinson said, we -- we have virtual offices. Our headquarters are at 480 Butler Ave. in Savannah -- in Chatham County.

Commissioner Shabazz said, where?

Ms. Atkinson said, Chatham County on Butler Ave. out near Montgomery.

Commissioner Shabazz said, Montgomery Crossroads?

Ms. Atkinson said, Montgomery, the community Montgomery.

Commissioner Shabazz said, Montgomery Street?

Chairman Scott said, no, the community.

Ms. Atkinson said, the community.

Commissioner Shabazz said, oh Montgomery.

Chairman Scott said, yeah.

Ms. Atkinson said, yeah, near Burnside Island, Montgomery.

Commissioner Shabazz said, Burnside Island. Okay.

Chairman Scott said, yeah.

Commissioner Shabazz said, there was something else I wanted to ask you.

Chairman Scott said, okay.

Commissioner Shabazz said, where are you housed at, you -- you say Montgomery? And -- okay. Thank you.

Ms. Atkinson said, so everything that we do is very focused on driving the results, so we don't have offices. We do have insurance for our Board, insurance for our events. So all -- our -- our workforce works virtually, and much of it is volunteer.

Commissioner Shabazz said, right.

Ms. Atkinson said, and they've been volunteering to demonstrate that this works. So where we -- the reason why we need --

Commissioner Shabazz said, I know what I wanted to ask you. How do you -- how are you compensated?

Ms. Atkinson said, we -- I'm not compensated. I -- I work on a volunteer basis. We have a COO that is compensated and we have another -- somebody that manages our gallery, our IT, that is paid on an hourly basis, and we have our manager of our intern program who is in Chatham County as well.

Commissioner Shabazz said, so you don't receive an income?

Ms. Atkinson said, no, I do this just out of sheer passion.

Commissioner Shabazz said, and another. I -- I want to make a suggestion. Just like the Boy Scouts gave us some information. Do you have any information to leave with us?

Ms. Atkinson said, I actually emailed to each of you a package called Ocean Exchange by the Numbers, and I can also re-email that to you again after this meeting.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. Thank you. Thank you.

Chairman Scott said, okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Shabazz said, thank you very much.

Ms. Atkinson said, thank you very much for your time.

Chairman Scott said, is there anyone else who have not signed up who would like to sign up and address the Commission? Hearing none, let me just remind folk this is the first of three hearings. Our second will be at 6:00 p.m. this afternoon, and our third hearing will be June 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in this room. Okay.

**AGENDA ITEM: V-1**  
**AGENDA DATE: June 17, 2014**

**TO:** Board of Commissioners  
**THRU:** Lee Smith, County Manager  
**FROM:** Amy Davis, Finance Director

**ISSUE:**

To hold a Public Hearing as requested by State law on the County's intent to levy a millage rate that differs from the calculated "rollback" millage rate for ad valorem tax purposes.

**BACKGROUND:**

Chatham County is required by State law (O.C.G.A. Code Section 48-5-32.1) to compute a "rollback" millage rate, which is the previous year's millage rate minus the millage equivalent of the total net assessed value added by reassessments of existing real property. The law further provided that, if the levying authority proposes to levy a millage rate in excess of the compound "rollback" rate, certain advertisements and three public hearings must be held before the adoption of the final millage rate.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

1. The 2014 digest has an increase in the total net assessed value. This has resulted in a calculated rollback rate that is lower than the current millage rate. The current millage rates are higher than the rollback rates computed using the formula in state law. The proposed millage rate for the General Fund M&O is lower than the current millage rate as a result of the one-time credit for re-purposed SPLOST in accordance with the latest SPLOST referendum.
2. At its May 23, 2014 meeting, the Chatham County Commission received the schedule for advertisements and public hearings necessary to adopt the millage rates for the 2014 Tax Digest:

- a. The advertisements required by state law stated that the Board of Commissioners has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require a -1.9% increase in General Maintenance and Operations, 0.58% in the Special Service District and 1.63% Chatham Area Transit Authority taxes. This gives the Board of Commissioners the option of adopted the millage rates recommended to balance the proposed budgets.
  - b. For the General Fund the advertised millage rate is 11.543 mills. This is lower than the calculated "rollback" rate of 11.767 mills, by 0.224 mills, a 1.9% decrease.
  - c. For the Special Service District the advertised millage rate is 4.13 mills. This is higher than the calculated "rollback" rate of 4.106 mills, by 0.024 mills, a 0.58% increase.
  - d. For the Chatham Area Transit Authority the advertised millage rate I 1.00 mills. This is higher than the calculated "rollback" rate of 0.984 mills, by 0.016 mills, a 1.64% increase.
3. Public hearings have been scheduled for 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on June 17, 2014. These hearings were advertised in the Savannah Morning News on June 9, 2014.
  4. A third public hearing is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on June 27, 2014. That hearing will be advertised in the Savannah Morning News on June 17, 2014. After the public hearing is complete, the Board can adopted the millage rate.
  5. Also, as required by law, on June 9, 2014, Chatham County issued a press release to the Savannah Morning News and the television media announcing the above mentioned millage rates and the three public hearings.
  6. Notification of the public hearings is being broadcast on Channel 16.

**FUNDING:**

N/A

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Hold the public hearings on June 17, 2014.
2. Give staff alternate direction.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

State law requires three advertised public hearings before the adoption of any millage rate the exceeds the "rollback" rate.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board Alternative 1.

Prepared by: Read DeHaven

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**VI. UPDATE ON LaROCHE AVENUE CULVERT PROJECT**

Chairman Scott said, so if there's no one else who wishes to speak on the budget, we will now have an update on the LaRoche Avenue culvert project.

County Engineer Leon Davenport said, good morning Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. Leon Davenport, County Engineer. I believe it was brought up -- brought up last week, concerns about the LaRoche Avenue project. This is a -- I know it's received a lot of attention in regards to the fact that it has closed one of the major thoroughfares coming on and off the Isle of Hope. Specifically, when it comes to a status update on the project, the project is on schedule and it is within budget. The contractor is working on the project today as we speak. I -- I really want to address any specific concerns or questions that the Commission may have in regards to the project, but as far as engineering's concerned, right now, the contractor is -- is -- is doing his job.

Chairman Scott said, since -- I'm sure that Commissioner Stone has a question for you and once she's done, Commissioner Brady has a question.

Mr. Davenport said, yes, sir.

Commissioner Stone said, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Davenport I have expressed my concerns, number one for the length of this project, a nine-month project to replace the culvert. I have been out there more than once to look at the progress, to look at the scope of it. I'm not an engineer. I can't tell you what needs to be done. But I do have several concerns. The last visit that I made out there around 3:30 or 3:45 I believe it was on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, there was no one working, and that's not the first time I've been out there that the site is just abandoned, I mean nothing is going on, which leads me ultimately to my biggest fear, and that is if we have a catastrophic storm or hurricane or something like that, that leaves one way on and one way off of that island of the Isle of Hope area. It is congested on Norwood Avenue now. I was really hoping that this project could be

completed before school started, but in the event that we've got to evacuate the island it's going to be a mess. So, I -- I -- I -- my concerns are why if we've got a project that's -- is -- is this critical to the ebb and flow of traffic for that island, nine months, and then we -- to go out there on not only one occasion but more than one occasion and see no one working. That is what is frustrating to me and to the residents who have contacted me.

Mr. Davenport said, well the contractor does have several subcontractors that are working on the project as well. Specifically, they've had the -- the individuals who've been out driving the piles that are required. This is a unique project, culvert project if you will. It was -- it was a tough design for us to look at, and -- and going back to as far as, you know, being here in what we consider hurricane season -- season in this part of the world, originally this project was bid back last fall. Actually we wanted to work in September of last year. Our biggest hold up with getting the project started was because of utility relocations specifically with AT&T. This is not the first time that -- that the bid came out from our department, it is actually the second time. We did bid the project once and involved the utility companies well on in advance. The bids came in, they were higher than we really felt like they needed to be so we redesigned some elements of the project and it was more than we wanted to be and the construction schedule was even worse than what you're looking at now. So we came back, redesigned the project in order to tighten up the schedule and tighten up the -- the construction costs. It did, of course, awarded by the Board last fall, September if I'm not mistaken, and over this whole time the utility contractors have known the project, in essence, that we were going to build. This is not the first time. It's -- it's a recurring issue when it comes to any project we do with road or drainage project. Relocation of utilities always seem to be problematic on the front end in allowing us to get started with the -- to let the contractor go basically. In this case specifically the notice to proceed was given to the contractor back in February, around the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The contractor couldn't actually even do anything until March the 3<sup>rd</sup> in attempting to wait and let the utility companies get out of the way. I -- I know this doesn't make it easier to -- to swallow from a construction standpoint, but our contractor is not wholly in control of the schedule on the front end from that aspect.

Commissioner Stone said, okay. I understand that. So -- so we've been delayed a month, would you not then assume that the contractor would want to make up for lost time and be working past 3:30, 3:40 in the afternoon. Or -- or -- some of these dates that you go out there and you see not only -- it -- it's abandoned. There's nothing going on.

Mr. Davenport said, well, there were several days, and I -- I have a complete log. We have an inspector that visits the site every day to see what's going on, to make sure the contractor's doing what he's supposed to do, and there -- right now I know that the contractor is on four ten-hour days, so he's not there on Fridays first of all. A lot of the days in the log are spelled to the contractor not being there, there are actually four days outside the initial month period. We go back 20 days the contractor was not even on site, okay, 16 of those days were on the front end because he's sitting around waiting on AT&T and the other utilities to get out of the way, four days he was not on site. Some of those days were transitional days. Because of this -- this project is -- it -- it's about as tight as we could have a project. We have nowhere to stage materials. We're not out in the of the -- of the Vernon River or out on Abercorn somewhere, you know, where we could have some adjoining properties, we're right next to a restaurant and some -- the property owners on the down stream side of the project. So, a lot of the days they had to give up, the -- the prime contractor had to give up staging areas in order to let the subcontractor come in and put his material there so that he could do his work, and so there's a lot of transitional days. I know that the schedule's been questioned. I understand that. It's my responsibility to give the contractor a schedule that's reasonable but not outside of reason, and the nine months that was given was my decision and that was to accommodate for a lot of the issues you're seeing. Now it's a month away, you -- you ask in regards to the contractor, shouldn't he be out there every day? He's got nine months. The schedule on the front end, you know, he -- he's basically caught to where he's right back where he needs to be right now. So from a standpoint of, you know, is he behind schedule? No, ma'am. He's on schedule as far as the schedule we provided him, and it's up to him to stay on schedule.

Commissioner Stone said, then I guess my real question would be to you. How do you project how long a project like this is going to take, and if you're going to give them nine months, and say you've got nine months, and they want to take three and four or five days off, it's the citizens that suffer.

Mr. Davenport said, I understand the citizens suffer, ma'am, but it's -- you know, when I come down to looking at a schedule, it's just historical. I mean we look at what it takes to do -- to drive sheet piling, you know, once -- what's it take to drive each one. We calculate it. Ma'am, it is my best estimate as to what time it takes to do a job.

Commissioner Stone said, I'm -- I'm not trying to be argumentative, but they're not working on this five days a week. They're taking a lot of time off. You're having traffic redirected. We're in the middle of storm season, and for the life of me I -- I -- I don't know why we give a contractor that much leeway. That's all.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Brady.

Commissioner Brady said, good morning, Mr. Davenport.

Mr. Davenport said, good morning, ma'am.

Commissioner Brady said, I, too, have been receiving phone calls about the lack of -- of seeing people physically work on this site, and I'm not -- and I'm not going to lie to you. I -- I don't ride out there every day to -- to look

to see if somebody's working. I -- I can do that. I don't want to do that, and I don't have enough time to do it, but -- and I understand what you're saying. Based on your experience, it was you who made the decision that it would probably take nine months.

Mr. Davenport said, yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Brady said, okay. Is there any -- and you also said that currently this project is on time and on budget.

Mr. Davenport said, yes, ma'am.

Commissioner Brady said, okay. Does the contractor know that -- that -- that the elected County Commissioners are -- are receiving complaints about the lack of seeing people out there working? The -- the -- the -- the thought of it being nine months. Is -- is -- is he aware of that?

Mr. Davenport said, he is fully aware, ma'am, because as you well know, this -- this project, is from it's on -- onset has been controversial obviously, and my staff, even myself, has spoken directly with the contractor, and said, you know, you got to be out there working, we got to get this one done. I mean I can't run outside -- there's not going to be any consideration for you to run over schedule if you don't do your job on the schedule I've given you. So from a standpoint has he been made aware? Yes, ma'am, he has.

Commissioner Brady said, is there -- have you sat down with the contractor and him -- and have they sat down with their subs to say is there anyway that we can deliver this completed project earlier than anticipated, the nine months?

Mr. Davenport said, staff has just made sure that they've conveyed to the contractor he needs to be on schedule. With any contractor, time is money. It's to his advantage to be done next week and get out of there, get paid, and be done. His subcontractors are very -- were very diligent in getting in and doing their work. The -- the -- the guy that came in to drive the sheet piling and the -- and the H piles in the bottom of the channel, he came in, he got done and got out of the way. Actually from that standpoint, they -- they finished a little bit early. Now -- now it's, you know, it helped the general contractor in relation to schedule. We're on schedule. We're not ahead of schedule. I don't want to -- I don't want to lead anybody to the fact that we're going to be done a month early. That's not going to be the case. This -- this is a very unique project. It is a tough project. It's tough for the people, it's tough for the adjoining property owners, and I understand that. It's just a tight site. I -- it -- it -- it's tough to -- to say that he can go any faster than he can because he's just constrained by tide, by space, so many things.

Commissioner Brady said, and -- and I understand that, and -- and my question I guess at this point would be to the County Manager and -- and -- and to the Chairman, but would it be appropriate for us at this point in time because this -- this -- I mean I agree with everything Commissioner Stone has said, and it's not in my District, but I do get phone calls about -- about this project. Would it be appropriate for us to -- to bring this contractor in and say, look, you know what, we've got to figure out how to bring this thing in earlier. I -- I -- I mean, I think we at least owe it to the tax paying citizens of this community to have that conversation with them, and have -- and -- and -- and if they come back and say there's no way we can do this any sooner, then tell us why because we're the ones that are out in front of the citizens. That contractor's not out there in front of the citizens. I mean, and then of course we're asking you and that's why you're here today is -- is because we're getting the complaints about the time line. You knew it -- the nine months, we were all upset about the time line. I think it's time for us to go back if appropriate to this contractor and say, look, we need to bring this thing in earlier.

Mr. Davenport said, well, I -- I can't speak on behalf of the Manager, ma'am, but I can say that, you know, from our standpoint, I don't think you're going to have any problem with the contractor laying out and not doing his job. I do not deny there have been days that the contractor has not been in, okay? Because there have been transitional days where he has not been on site. There have been some days where he has started work in the mornings and the tide has come in and he's had nowhere to go. I mean every morning he has to pump the site dry because there's just no way for him to keep all the water out. So, you know, it -- it's -- it's just a tough project. All I can say, ma'am, is -- is that, you know, bringing the contractor in, we've awarded a contract to him. We've given him a set amount of time to be done. We cannot incentivize the contractor to get done any earlier or tell him how to do his business. It's his means and methods how he does it within his contract time. We only have the leverage on our contract to penalize the contractor if he exceeds his time on the construction project.

Commissioner Brady said, and I understand all that, and, you know, sometimes you just have to ask the question, and they can say yes and they can say no and they can give us a reason. And my last, final comment will be this, and I -- and I don't -- I don't go through the county website very often. I do look at it. Do we have -- do we have pages on our -- on our website that -- that gives updates to projects, say on a -- a -- a monthly basis?

Mr. Davenport said, engineering actually has --

Commissioner Brady said, where the company can go -- I mean so citizens can go look at it?

Mr. Davenport said, yes, ma'am. Actually you can go to the engineering web page on the county site --

Commissioner Brady said, mm-hmm.

Mr. Davenport said, and you can pull up the active construction projects out there. Now does it give a daily update of where we are on schedule and that kind of thing? No, ma'am, but it does tell you what projects are out there and if I'm not mistaken, it gives you the approximate days of when it's to be completed, when it should be back up or -- or completed.

Commissioner Brady said, but it doesn't give like a monthly update?

Mr. Davenport said, no, ma'am. No, ma'am.

Commissioner Brady said, as to where you are.

County Manager Lee Smith said, it's something we could look at though.

Commissioner Brady said, that -- that's an easy fix --

County Manager Smith said, sure.

Commissioner Brady said, -- at least it --

County Manager Smith said, sure.

Commissioner Brady said, -- notifies the citizens they -- they have access to look at something.

County Manager Smith said, okay.

Commissioner Brady said, thank you.

Mr. Davenport said, you're welcome.

Commissioner Shabazz said, yes. Good morning.

Chairman Scott said, Commissioner Shabazz.

Mr. Davenport said, yes, sir.

Commissioner Shabazz said, two questions. What's the dollar amount of this project?

Mr. Davenport said, one I can't give you off the top of my head, sir. I'll have to go back and look. I apologize.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay.

Mr. Davenport said, I -- I have to -- hold on just -- Bill, do you know?

Mr. Bill Nicholson said, the original amount was \$1,053,700, I think, and we just had a \$6500 change order added to it, I believe.

Commissioner Shabazz said, okay. And then the other question is how did you come up with the time?

Mr. Davenport said, again, we an -- we look at every project. A road project, a drainage project, it doesn't matter. If you look at it from a construction staging standpoint, he has to do this before he can do that before he can this, and each one of those elements you just look at and say, here's the anticipated or approximate time it will take to do the element.

Commissioner Shabazz said, did you use some type of critical pathway?

Mr. Davenport said, no, sir. I mean, this is -- this is Leon and -- and his staff sitting and -- and looking and getting our best guess as to what we think it will take to do a project.

Commissioner Shabazz said, thank you.

Mr. Davenport said, yes, sir.

Chairman Scott said, any further questions? All right. Leon, please expect to provide a -- an update at every meeting of the Commission until the project is completed.

Mr. Davenport said, yes, sir.

Commissioner Stone said, thank you.

Chairman Scott said, if there is no one else that wish to speak, again, I would remind you that we have a second public hearing this evening at 6:00 p.m. and then the third public hearing on June 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. This public hearing of June 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 a.m. is now adjourned.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be brought before the Commissioners, the Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

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**APPROVED: THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF JUNE, 2014.**

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**ALBERT J. SCOTT, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY,  
GEORGIA**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**JANICE E. BOCOOK, CLERK OF COMMISSION**