



**CITY OF TOCCOA**  
**CITY COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES • APRIL 16, 2024**

**Budget Meeting**

**City Commission/Court Room**

**1:00 PM**

92 North Alexander, Toccoa, GA 30577

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gail Fry called the Budget Meeting to order at 1:00 pm

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Terry Carter	Vice Mayor	Present	
Gail Fry	Mayor	Present	
Evan Hellenga	Commissioner	Present	
Ron Matheson	Commissioner	Present	
Michelle Jamieson	Commissioner	Present	
Fredda O. Wheeler	City Manager	Present	
John Dickerson	Attorney	Absent	
Beth Rider	City Clerk	Present	

- Budget Discussion with Department Heads

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

Utilities

Utilities Director Harry Scott

- Significant increase in Utility Rates - Harry stated the water transfer funds will decrease but the gas will make up for it
- Water Treatment improvements and SPLOST Funds - Water System Improvements and SPLOST Funds
- Toccoa Creek - \$4,000,000.00 allocated for project in SPLOST VII to go with ARPA and State Grant
- Water and Wastewater asking to increase sewer rate \$2.00 for base rate will increase revenue about \$95,000.00 in revenue; this will help with Toccoa and Eastanollee plant improvements
- Water & sewer tap rate proposal to double rates:
  - ¾ inch = \$1,500.00
  - 1 inch = \$2,000.00
  - 2 inch and above will be by quote

Harry discussed expenditure increases, Capital Outlay for Phase II upgrades at Eastanollee Creek

- Yonah \$75,000.00 for electricity
- Davidson Creek \$50,000.00 for electricity

- Administration increase across the board
- Lift Stations for repair and maintenance, contract labor and electricity
- Eastanollee Creek Plant disposal costs, contract labor chemicals
- Toccoa Creek Plant contract labor and electricity
- Water Treatment Plant for personnel cost, supplies, chemicals, electricity and capital payment on Dechlorination System
- Water Mains
- Elevated storage for contract labor and electricity
- Booster pumps
- Construction and inspection personnel and supplies

Natural Gas Fund increase of \$820,395

Natural Gas Revenues rate increase to equal \$1,189,563 in revenues

- Proposed Natural Gas rate increase increment of \$0.03 per CCF  
For Georgia only

RESULT:	PRESENTATION
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Public Works

Public Works Director Randy Smith

Randy stated he had very little change from last year's budget.

Becky stated she looked at Electricity and sometimes have to add more for fuel.

Emory Johnson and Henderson Falls Park was discussed.

\$5,000 was added for a swing set at Emory Johnson

Mayor Fry stated we removed the Playground equipment at Henderson Falls because of safety issues all that is left are the swings. We removed equipment at Emory Johnson for the same reason which left Emory Johnson with nothing. Mayor Fry stated she would like to find a way to pay for playground equipment at Henderson Falls, people rent those facilities and we talk about necessities, we have to have water and gas, but this is quality of life. A lot of kids don't have the opportunity to go to Six Flags and other places and this would be free.

Finance Director Becky Bohannon stated \$60,000.00 was in the FY 2024 budget in the General Reserve but don't have \$60,000.00 in General Reserves but \$60,000.00 will not get us much of anything.

Randy Smith stated in preparing for the 24' budget we had requested \$150,000.00 but was told to make it \$60,000.00. The magnitude of the playground we had will be well over \$100,000.00.

Mayor Fry stated we could ask Jeremy to look for some grants.

Commissioner Carter asked if we have someone that maintains the park on a daily basis, does the park need any improvements, painting or upkeep.

Randy Smith stated he is only there on the weekends, through the week they clean the passage way downtown check it every morning, empty trash and clean the bathrooms. The paint is ok, the bathrooms are worn and have been vandalized and could use some upgrades.

Commissioner Carter stated the building at Emory Johnson needs to be repainted. Commissioners requested \$100,000.00 to be added to a line item for Henderson Falls Park and to begin looking for grants.

Commissioners requested the gate at Henderson Falls Park to be locked at night

Randy Smith discussed Lake Toccoa Golf Course, Boat Rentals all are operating good.

Golf Carts are falling apart and costing money each day.

We started with a lease program and paid it out early and did not purchase any new ones in last year's budget.

**RESULT:            PRESENTATION**

Human Resources

Human Resource Director, Jan Crawford

Ms. Wheeler asked if we know what to expect our increase to be with MSI and if there were any large incidents that might impact it. Ms. Crawford stated it would not be until the next 2 months, they will start looking at our claims and we are doing pretty well. Ms. Crawford stated some of our larger claims will come off this year.

Ms. Crawford stated she is good and just reallocating money where it needs to go.

Ms. Crawford explained the Sick Leave Policy and Year End Bonus.

Ms. Crawford stated we currently have 167 fulltime employees, 8 part-time, Fire has 1 opening, Police has 1 opening, Public Works has 1 opening and Utilities has 3 openings.

Finance Director Becky Bohannon stated she and Jan had talked about increasing the line item for Drug Testing to \$18,000.00, this will include pre-employment drug testing and post accident.

Ms. Bohannon stated they discussed increasing the line item for Employee Assistance Program from \$2,800.00 to \$4,000.00 since we have a new partner it may be utilized more.

**RESULT:            PRESENTATION**

Community Development

Community Development Director Jeremy Ward

Discussion of MainStreet Program advertising and promotion

We made several cuts, we expect revenue to increase in miscellaneous sales at events.

We expect permit fees to increase, we have had 13 houses permitted this year compared to last year we had 13-14 all of last year.

We have been able to cut across the board; the Ritz had an increase slightly due to utilities and contract labor.

The amount for the gardener for downtown will be taken out of Downtown Development and Randy Smith, Public Works will absorb those duties.

Mayor Fry asked Mr. Ward about the grant opportunities for City Hall, if he was actively looking into the grants for the City Hall funding for renovations. Mr. Ward stated he was looking and he has mostly been able to find loans, there are not many grants for public facilities. He is waiting to hear back answers to a few questions regarding interior and exterior renovations.

Mayor Fry stated we would like to pursue grants for Parks and Recreation if there is one we need work done at Henderson Falls Park. We need playground equipment and structures need upgrades. Mayor Fry stated if you could look for funding or matching grants for Parks and Recreation. Mr. Ward stated this is for the existing park and not a new park. Mayor Fry stated if there is a grant for a new park there is plenty of room at Henderson Falls Park for pickle ball courts, we would like to focus on what we have. Anything you can come up with will be great.

Mr. Ward stated the Greenspace is moving along excellently. We have not had any significant problems, the timeline should still be good.

Mr. Ward stated we have had some change in personnel and may shift a part-time worker to full time.

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

Police

Police Chief Jimmy Mize

Chief Mize stated the car cameras are the biggest part of his budget for this year. We had a couple of increases in line items and tried to hold everything to a minimum but everything has increased.

We have a couple of grants we are, a Micro grant that came from the Governor's Office to put 3 computers in the cars, all we have to pay for is the installation.

Chief Mize stated we are getting reimbursed for 10 hours of traffic time from the GOHS Grant.

Commissioner Carter asked about Recorders Court fines. Chief Mize stated a lot of the citations get moved to State Court, changed to a warning and some are dismissed.

Discussion of Security Cameras downtown.

Discussion for Police Officers to close the gate at Henderson Falls Park at 9:00 pm

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

Fire

Fire Chief Jeff Haslup

Vice-Mayor Carter asked about overtime.

Chief Haslup stated we were short 3 employees and have to have a minimum of 6

Today we are 1 short

We worked out getting extrication equipment when we get our new fire truck with SPLOST money

Chief Haslup stated both stations will need a roof but Fernside is the worst.

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

City Clerk

City Clerk Beth Rider

Ms. Rider stated she was good with her budget and not asking for any changes.

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

City Manager

City Manager Fredda Wheeler

Millage will go back to 6.0 mills

Ms. Wheeler discussed the possibility of raising the downtown district millage another  $\frac{3}{4}$  mills that would bring in around \$7,000 more dollars. Commissioners stated they did not want to add any more to the downtown district.

Tax Collection is 94 -96% every year

3% increase for employees

Chamber of Commerce will be funded at the current rate of \$24,000.00

Standard support for Development Authority

The Toccoa Airport asked for a small increase for projects, they are getting a grant and asking for a 3 way split between the City and County and they would pick up the third part  
Animal Control we held it at \$35,691.00 that is for the Animal Control Officer. We don't pay more than 50% of the salary.

Humane Shelter for general operations \$185,850.00

Mayor Fry stated we cannot approve the Humane Shelter funding because we just received the audit.

The City Manager Budget, Commission Budget and City Attorney everything is very much the same

Mayor Fry stated we need to look at some of the roads that need to be paved. There are some companies out there that can give you some direction to clean the stones. City Manager Fredda Wheeler stated we are running out of room and we may need to look at not selling any more lots. We try to maintain it, we have one guy in the Street Department that is supposed to be there 8 hours a day, we try to keep the grass cut and the headstones blown off.

Manager Wheeler stated she and Beth rode out last week canvassing the areas for code enforcement opportunities we need to address and ended up with 2 or 3 pages.

Vice-Mayor Carter asked about putting money aside for City Hall to start renovations. Ms. Wheeler stated we put out bids for the pressure washing/soft washing, painting and electrical.

Ms. Wheeler stated we could have a work session to see what kind of money we are looking at for that phase and hopefully get an idea for interior remodeling and a method to put some money back or financing.

Commissioners voted by Consensus to give the employees Juneteenth Holiday.

Jeff Roberts, Humane Shelter Director stated the Animal Shelter will receive \$65,000 grant from the Atlanta Humane Shelter for a new van

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**

Finance

Finance Director Becky Bohannon

Becky had no budget changes to discuss.

**RESULT: PRESENTATION**



*Gail Guy*  
Mayor  
*Beth Rider*  
City Clerk