

2010 CEO Budget Meeting
Arabia Mountain High School

January 25, 2010

CEO Ellis opened the meeting with acknowledgements of elected officials which included DeKalb County Commissioner Connie Stokes; District Attorney, Gwen Keyes Fleming; Claudia Saari, Public Defender, State Court Judge Carriere, and State Senator Ronald Ramsey, Sr. The CEO welcomed the community and sponsors to the budget meeting.

The CEO stated that his goal was to balance the budget and to make the citizens a priority for DeKalb County's Administration. He explained the need to support our public safety and that a key priority for the 2010 budget was to maintain our sworn public safety officials, police officers and first responders. He stated that DeKalb County has to significantly reduce its budget this year and increase the millage rate in order to provide the same level of service to its citizens. CEO Ellis encouraged citizens to provide any ideas they have to help provide funding for County services.

Commissioner Stokes commented on the timeline of the budget process. She stated that the Board of Commissioners would encourage citizens to attend and participate with their ideas in the Budget Committee meetings. She stated that public safety is a priority for her as well as the entire Board of Commissioners.

CEO presented Power Point Slide Presentation of DeKalb County 2010 Budget

Questions/Comments

1. *Ms. Jackie Johnson: What services does DeKalb County provide to the City of Dunwoody and how will the County communicate the budget spending throughout the year?*

Response from Chief Operating Officer: There is an intergovernmental agreement between DeKalb and City of Dunwoody. Negotiated terms for fire services, 9-11, Roads and Drainage, road repair and sanitation and traffic signalization.

Response from CEO and Commissioner Stokes: The budget is online and available for all to look at and follow. All citizens are welcome to attend the Budget and Finance meetings. The Board of Commissioner meetings are televised on DCTV. The CEO explained that the tax digest is falling. There is a \$52-60 million gap and they are really trying to adjust taxes without a burden on the citizens.

2. *Ms. Elaine Gibson: When will the roads be repaired and when will her property be reappraised?*

Response from CEO: The CEO explained his efforts with working with the Tax Assessors to have property taxes adjusted. That even in this bad economy property values have risen. He also explained that the creation of the City of Dunwoody helped with the increase in the millage rate. NACA is lobbying the federal government for funds (\$175 million).

3. *Comments by Judge Carriere, State Court Judge: Explained the need to support public safety and not reduce the staff in that area.*
4. *Comments by Gwen Keyes Fleming, DeKalb County District Attorney: Commented that the quality of life in our community depends on having a safe community and therefore we need to support public safety.*
5. *Comments by Claudia Saari, Acting Chief Prosecutor: Commented on the 15,000 criminal cases DeKalb had last year from traffic to criminal cases and how citizens need to support public safety.*
6. *Comments by CEO: The CEO explained that his finance team and COO first brought the budget to him without raising taxes. Then they brought it to him with personnel being laid off. Then they introduced a budget with cuts that left out a reduction in the police, fire, sheriffs, solicitor general and DA's office.*
7. *Leonard Floyd, a retired DeKalb employees says he worked for DeKalb 30 years. He says the County is trashed, there is garbage all over, road kill. He says the CEO should try and keep the low paid employees employed. He says he would like a list of all of the employees that make \$25,000 and above that do not live in DeKalb County and that there should be a policy that if they do not live in DeKalb they should not work for DeKalb County Government.*

Response from CEO: He stated that DeKalb has a very good sanitation services. DeKalb may need to "beef" up code enforcement. He explained that we are in process of re-writing our codes and we want to utilize best practices. There is no mandate in DeKalb that to work for DeKalb Government you have to live in DeKalb and he does not agree with having to live in DeKalb to work for the County. He would like to incentivize people to want to live in DeKalb. He explained that an Inspector General position maybe needed in DeKalb.

8. *Marie Thomas, citizen commented that if you want sales taxes to come back to you, shop in DeKalb County.*
9. *Jay Cunningham, School Board Member commented that there is a \$56 million short fall in the school budget and that if taxes are increased, everything goes up. He explained that the DeKalb County School system was having a budget meeting on Thursday at 6:00 and that citizens who are interested in DeKalb County Schools should attend.*
10. *Viola Craig: commented that she agrees its good to spend in DeKalb. She wanted to know how much of the school boards money is spent in the City of Dunwoody?*

Response from Jay Cunningham: City of Dunwoody is still under the DeKalb County School system.

Response from CEO: The City of Dunwoody took a large commercial portion of the County and that has had a huge impact on this budget short fall.

11. *Senator Ramsey: Commented about the budget issues on the state level. Commented on issues of gun fire with heavy caliber weapons. He emphasized the importance of maintaining public safety.*

The CEO concluded the meeting and reminded everyone of the seven (7) upcoming budget meetings around the county.