

**2010 CEO Budget Meeting  
McNair Academy  
January 12, 2010**

CEO Ellis opened the session with acknowledgements of elected officials: Commissioners Connie Stokes and Larry Johnson, Solicitor General Robert James and Judge C.J. Becker. Later to enter the session with acknowledgements were Commissioners Sharon Barnes-Sutton and Kathy Gannon. The CEO welcomed the community and sponsors of the budget gathering. Commissioner Connie Stokes made opening comments regarding the timeline of the budget stating that by law it was to be approved and adopted by March 1, 2010.

CEO: Slide presentation of DeKalb County 2010 Budget

**Questions/Comments:**

**Comments from Judge CJ Becker:** The Public Safety and the Courts system are separate forms of government. To house an inmate cost \$54.00 a day and within 48 hours of an arrest violators must be seen by the judge and prosecutor. This is one of the reasons why cost is so high in the Courts system.

**Comments from the CEO:** He thanked Judge Becker. The amount of taxes needed to provide essential services is in question? He disputed the AJC's comment that crime will go up if we do not raise taxes and that the county does not have any funds. The CEO has always felt that government should tighten its belt first. If spending is controlled now, the County can prepare for a decent recovery later.

*1. What's your pressure on the 19 delegates as it relates to annexation for commercial properties?*

**Response from Commissioner Gannon:** The BOC unanimously endorsed a resolution that opposes annexation; however the cities do have the upper hand in moving forward on annexation and the legislature gave the County that power. It is the BOC's resolution that the powers should not be unilateral. Boundaries maybe changed but work is being accomplished with state legislators, city councils and mayors.

*2. Although conservatism maybe necessary, what standard will you implement to enhance Public Safety?*

**Response from the CEO:** The CEO referred back to Public Safety slide. The County has proposed to dedicate \$1.25M to Public Safety that will include 151 police, 86 Fire Rescue 143 for Sheriff, 30 DA positions to mitigate any impact of early retirement.

3. *What programs are going to be implemented to enhance the DA's office?*

**Response from the CEO:** The Courts personnel are elected, constitutional officers, their office is independently run. Although the County adopts the budget, DeKalb County does not govern those offices. A transparency board will investigate waste, fraud and abuse that will help to balance proper operations. The CEO is supporting the recommendation of the transparency board to bring on an Inspector General that will monitor waste, fraud and abuse.

4. *What will be done to monitor the Public Safety department? What measures are being taken to stop officers in uniform from committing crimes? This does something to our local economy.*

**Response from the CEO:** A Public Safety Director was appointed during the reorganization of the Public Safety Department who manages the department as a whole. The reorganization was designed to make some significant changes to the department's day-to-day operations and functions. The plan is to monitor front line employees to ensure excellent customer service, feedback from citizens concerns are address and that staff are held accountable. This will involve customer service training.

5. *Copper thieves have decimated DeKalb County. Maybe permits should be implemented for persons that desire to recycle copper. They need to have a business license in this county and in this state.*

**Response from the CEO:** Public Safety is priority for the County. All persons accused deserve their day in court. However, there is a real cost to the county to house persons in the jails (\$54.00 a day). The Judicial system will continue to work towards combating these offenses.

6. *Long-term planning to encourage businesses is needed especially in the Stonecrest areas where there are vacant commercial properties and areas where zoning permits*

**Response from the CEO:** The CEO thanked the citizen for his service as a veteran. The County is trying to devise a plan that will offer economic incentives while still maintaining a balanced budget. An abatement policy by the Supreme Court would not allow the county to use bonding. Legislation is being discussed to stimulate new development. The County's role is to remove impediments and find ways to enhance the communities.

**Response from DCOO:** An economic incentive policy to encourage small business development is one of the ways that is planned to accomplish this. County departments will need to work closer together to uplift and stimulate the economy. We have lost a lot of businesses which affect our economy in the areas of revenue and job loss.

**Response from the Office of Economic Development:** The significance of what is happening is great therefore your input is critical to our success. The community needs to continue to talk about the neighborhoods that are underserved to encourage small businesses to move to the county.

**Response from Workforce Development:** On a short-term basis, Workforce Development offers small businesses a section of office space free of charge to conduct HR related activities including, making phone call, interviewing jobseekers and conducting business meetings on a short-term basis.

**Response from Community Development:** DEBCO loans for small businesses through the Office of Community Development are available. Office of Economic Development is working on how to target communities that are underserved.

*7. Idle youth need us to make an investment in their future via our parks, community centers and Boys and Girls Clubs. What do you have in mind to engage our youth?*

**Response from Public Safety:** The Public Safety Department is proactively working with youth to provide programs such as “Pal Plus”. The “Pal Plus” program helps kids reach their athletic and career goals through mentoring of public safety officers to include cultural arts learning about other cities, states, counties and the music industry.

**Response from Office of Neighborhood Empowerment:** The Heart of DeKalb program sponsored by the Office of the CEO was also a youth program that was a great success. Employees can utilize networking by connecting with church groups, communities and social clubs that offer youth development programs.

**Response from Workforce Development:** To aid youth in education and career goals Workforce Development has a youth program that targets youth ages 14-21. Between June 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, 1150 youth worked via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus) funds. Although the youth program targets youth 14-21 the immediate focus is to work with out of school, older youth. In an effort to expose youth to careers in computer technology Workforce Development is partnering with the Information Systems Departments to implement an internship program.

**Response from the CEO:** The Heart of DeKalb project that was piloted at Towers High School allowed youth to create a green city that mirrored our own government structure such as the appointment of a CEO and other officers. This afforded youth an opportunity to get a real glimpse of county government and its operations.

*8. The citizen commented that he appreciated the CEO meeting together with neighborhood leadership to collaborate and ensure fiscal accountability of county government. We need to tour neighborhoods within the county specifically in South DeKalb. We can raise our revenues if we assess and fine the code violators in our neighborhoods. (Item for CEO Attention)*

**Response from Code Enforcement:** A Code Enforcement tour is the CEO’s vision. A helicopter ride over the County provided a rare perspective of this County during the flood damage which helped him to realize the vast resources DeKalb County has to offer. There is a countywide need and this is one of the reasons why we are having these neighborhoods budget meetings.

9. *Comment: Citizen provided information on a youth empowerment summit at Bouie Elementary School on March 27, 2010 at 11:00am -2:00pm. For more information please call (404) 484-5420 Trevia Jones*

10. *The County needs to look at the fact that residents don't have numeric addresses on mailboxes. The absence of numeric address on mailboxes hinders the ability to identify a location when responding to emergency and non-emergency call. **The CEO requested this name and phone number: Ms. Joscelyn O'Neil is the person that made the comment. She is with the Greater Towers Community Association she can be reached at (404) 289-7932 home or (770) 771-3750 cell.***

**Response from Code Enforcement:** This is already in our ordinances and is definitely a violation. If the citizen will provide the street name an officer will definitely come out to investigate.

11. *There is already a shortage in Code Enforcement. What are we doing about this? Is there an allocation of dollars for more Code Enforcement Officers?*

**Response from Public Safety:** Yes there is a shortage and we want more Code Enforcement officers on the streets. Citizens are letting their commissioners and community leaders know what their priorities are. Thank you for letting us know what you are willing to sacrifice for public safety.

12. *The need for Code Enforcement Officers has been an issue for years and years. Why don't we have enough officers... are we paying enough...why are they leaving? Should we conduct a study?*

**Response from the CEO:** There are repeated comments regarding the need for Code Enforcement and this will be discussed further with Director Miller.

13. *Citizen reported she was held hostage by a dog in my car. Code Enforcement has been to the house where the dog lives. The dog owner has been to court, and paid the fine however the problem persists. Maybe the dog owner does not know nor understand the law, because his property is also neglected. Something needs to be done about this*

**Response from the CEO:** The CEO stated that he is committed to getting together with the BOC and Director Miller to enforce county codes...this is a priority.