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Brookhaven approves first operating budget

Brookhaven, GA, March 26, 2013 –The Brookhaven Mayor and City Council voted unanimously Tuesday night in support of a \$16.465 million budget for Fiscal Year 2013.

The budget includes operating expenses for the city, including administration, police, community development, parks and recreation, public works, legal and other city services. This includes money to establish Brookhaven's own police department.

The budget does not include a final tax rate. The Council set a temporary 3.35 millage rate, but anticipates setting a lower millage rate during the mid-year budget adjustments in the summer.

"We are committed to maintaining a lean and fiscally responsible budget," Mayor J. Max Davis said. "We are waiting to receive the tax digest and HOST figures from DeKalb, but will continue to work diligently to obtain the lowest millage rate possible now and in successive years."

Brookhaven's city charter prohibits the Council from raising the millage rate above 3.35 mills.

The budget is contingent on DeKalb County setting the HOST sales tax credit, the tax digest and property assessments, as well as the city receiving franchise fees. The city's revenue for this first year budget will be less than future years because the city is not drawing from a full year of revenue.

Brookhaven anticipates receiving \$5 million in real property tax, \$3.5 million in HOST sales tax, \$400,000 in personal property tax and \$350,000 in motor vehicle tax, along with \$1.8 million in business and occupation tax and \$1.3 million in franchise fees.

This budgeted revenue does not include the full amount that Brookhaven anticipated receiving from DeKalb for police services. Several days before the city referendum, the DeKalb County CEO reduced the level of revenue that goes to city residents, effectively raising taxes on all city residents. DeKalb removed money intended only for police services and placed it to the county's general fund, which ultimately impacted the amount of revenue coming to all cities in DeKalb.

Ga. Rep. Mike Jacobs (R-Brookhaven) has sent a letter to Attorney General Sam Olens, requesting a legal opinion on DeKalb County's ability to raise the millage rate beyond the rollback rate without holding public hearings as required by state law.

"This budget is a work in progress and contingent on revenue from DeKalb County," Davis said. "Our goal remains the same: for Brookhaven taxpayers to pay equal or less than their previous tax rate while receiving better quality city services."

To view the full budget, visit www.brookhavenga.gov.

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