

Fulton County Board of Commissioners Considering Reducing the 2010 Budget By Over \$100 Million!

With sharply-declining revenues from sales tax and the property tax, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners is faced with the choice of significantly cutting the 2010 budget or raising taxes.

To its credit, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners is considering three scenarios involving the reduction of the 2010 General Fund budget by over \$100 million from \$665,839,742 in 2009 to \$536,729,572 in 2010. The Board is to be complemented in implementing these reductions during the worst recession since 1929.

The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation has followed the over-spending during the past ten years, and, in November 2008, published a Newsletter titled Fulton County: "Wasteful & Unnecessary Spending Resulting In a Financial Crisis." Here are some recommendations that the Board of Commissioners should carefully consider:

I. The Justice System Totaling \$196 Million:

The largest portion of the proposed budget is the Justice System at \$196 million or 36% of the entire General Fund Budget. The Taxpayers Foundation (and the Fulton County Blue Ribbon Committee report) urge that Fulton County secure the services of a professional firm to provide benchmarks, best practices and national comparisons of the Fulton County Justice System.

In comparing the per capita costs of the Fulton County Superior Court with the Superior Courts of surrounding counties, Fulton is \$21.60 per capita, Cobb is \$7.34, Dekalb is \$10.21 and Gwinnett is \$10.02. In comparing the per capita costs of the Clerks of Superior Court, Fulton is \$15.29, Cobb is \$6.97, Dekalb is \$6.30, and Gwinnett is \$11.06. Comparing Juvenile Court, Fulton is \$15.50 per capita, Cobb is \$7.29, Dekalb is \$9.15 and Gwinnett is \$8.24. Finally, in comparing the per capita costs of the County District Attorney, Fulton is \$21.77, Cobb is \$9.19, Dekalb is \$13.99 and Gwinnett is \$9.56.

II. Outsourcing County Services:

The 2010 Fulton County budget includes the County Sheriff at \$89,108,060, Information Technology at \$13,108,054, Registration & Elections at \$10,245,097, Medical Examiner at \$3,044,654, Purchasing at \$3,396,708, Financing at \$5,641,539 and Public Works at \$5,841,707. These services should be bid on by reputable private firms to determine comparable costs; Fulton County should contract out each service that is more economical and efficient.

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III. Discretionary Service Which Should Be Phased-Out:

There are several Fulton County services which are discretionary. The Taxpayers Foundation recommends eliminating or phasing out: Arts Council at \$4,275,628, Behavioral Health at \$12,771,454 and Health Fund Transfer at \$6,222,053. These minimally-utilized services total \$23,269,135.

IV. Sell or Lease County Properties:

Fulton County owns many prime properties. With the incorporation of 95% of Fulton County, the Government Center on Pryor Street has a high vacancy. In view of this, it is wasteful for taxpayers to spend \$4 million annually to lease administrative space. This is stated on page 4 of the Report on Creating a New Milton county by Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. In addition, Fulton County should not be in the airport business and should sell or lease the Charley Brown Airport.

The Importance of Balancing Approved Budgets – Without Deficit Spending

The 2007-2009 Fulton County budgets were not balanced. Each included deficit spending. The Reserve Fund balance at January 1, 2007 was \$141 million. This Reserve will be eroded to \$38 million on December 31, 2009 and this \$38 million will not be collected until 2010. The Board of Commissioners has instructed the County Manager to prepare the 2010 budget with additional deficit spending. This will not only reduce the Reserve Fund minimum, but will jeopardize the excellent current bond rating. Scenario “B” of the proposed 2010 budget reduces the minimum reserve funding from one month or 8.33% of annual expenditures to 5%. This will continue the practice of spending reserves for current operations that has occurred in 2007, 2008 and 2009. This must stop!

Unite the Fight To Bring Better Government to Atlanta and Fulton County!

I enclose my annual membership of:

\$25 Senior ___ \$50 Family ___ \$100 Patron ___ \$200 Corporate ___ \$1000 Champion ___

In addition, I enclose a **tax-deductible** contribution of: \$100 ___ \$500 ___ Other ___

If you prefer, you can charge your membership or a donation online at www.fctf.org

Name _____
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Fulton County FY 2010 Proposed Budget General Fund w/ Different Scenarios

	Scenario A 2010 Proposed Budget	Scenario B 2010 Proposed Budget	Scenario C 2010 Proposed Budget
Revenues			
Property Taxes	421,747,588	421,747,588	421,747,588
Local Option Sales Taxes	32,000,000	32,000,000	32,000,000
All Other	74,957,264	75,957,264	75,957,264
Total Revenues	\$528,704,852	\$529,704,852	\$529,704,852
Expenditures			
Arts Council	3,104,330	4,275,628	4,806,295
Behavioral Health	11,983,592	12,771,454	14,213,861
Board of Commissioners	3,341,198	2,864,383	3,182,417
Clerk to the Commission	1,080,647	908,335	1,010,458
Cooperative Ext	443,011	500,645	552,880
County Attorney	3,760,338	3,111,306	3,495,964
County Manager	8,597,731	9,609,692	10,762,008
County Marshal	4,496,430	4,967,126	5,503,146
District Attorney	16,716,267	18,687,081	20,931,411
Environ/Comm. Dev.	977,869	1,094,837	1,223,082
Family/Children Svcs	4,513,872	7,908,027	8,571,644
Finance	5,099,704	5,641,539	6,258,571
General Services	26,246,919	29,247,031	32,663,509
Grady Hospital	60,342,581	48,969,348	*
Health Fund Transfer	11,247,406	11,624,407	13,105,939
Housing/Comm Svcs	1,000,000	615,423	686,975
Human Services	19,823,174	24,385,238	27,416,294
Health/Human Svcs	7,099,990	6,222,053	6,997,012
Info Tech	19,301,219	21,723,806	24,379,980
Juvenile Court	11,853,835	13,108,054	14,536,339
Library	25,448,842	28,142,557	31,356,036
Medical Examiner	2,725,611	3,044,654	3,407,976
Non Agency	68,557,438	68,604,083	71,048,649
reserve re-funding priority programs	10,828,611	0	*
Personnel	3,262,877	3,583,114	3,947,794
Police	3,690,569	4,056,828	4,473,917
Probate Court	2,134,141	2,363,361	2,624,394
Public Defender	8,879,049	9,939,756	11,147,672
Public Works	5,228,113	5,841,707	6,540,458
Purchasing	3,042,280	3,396,708	3,800,326
Registration & Elections	10,015,570	10,245,097	10,506,478
Sheriff	80,551,575	89,108,060	98,852,047
State Court-General	11,600,643	12,797,662	14,160,807
State Court-Judges	3,262,967	3,604,802	3,994,079
State Court-Solicitor General	4,897,289	5,423,537	6,022,820
Superior Court-Clerk	11,874,171	13,207,290	14,725,425
Superior Court-General	15,436,421	17,195,096	19,175,071
Superior Court-Judges	3,818,030	4,277,090	4,799,861
Tax Assessor	10,151,210	11,279,033	12,563,378
Tax Commissioner	11,153,654	12,383,724	13,784,507
Total Expenditures	517,609,175	536,729,572	537,229,572
Revenues > Expenditures	11,095,677	-7,024,720	-7,524,720
Fund Balance– Beginning	38,021,168	38,021,168	38,021,168
Fund Balance– Ending	49,116,844	39,996,448	30,496,448
Reserve for Compensated Absences Payouts	6,000,000	4,159,969	3,634,969
Fund Balance Reserve at 8.33% reduced to 5%	46,116,844	26,836,479	26,861,479
Amount needed to get the fund balance to 8.33%	0	0	0

Public Comment On The 2010 Budget

WHEN: On Wednesday, January 6th and Wednesday, January 20th, 2010 at 10AM, there will be opportunity for the members and friends of the Taxpayers Foundation to voice their comments to the Board of Commissioners.

WHERE: This will be held in the Assembly Hall, 141 Pryor Street, Atlanta 30303 (downtown).

WHO: Members and friends of the Taxpayers Foundation are urged to attend!

****Rides will be provided downtown only if there is enough interest! Please RSVP with the Foundation office a.s.a.p. so we can plan accordingly!**

**Can't join us?
Email the Commissioners with your comments!**

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