



Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton County

October 2011

Fulton County Facing 2012 Deficit



Fulton County Facing Deficit in 2012

The revenues of Fulton County (and every county in Georgia) are continuing to decline as property values continue to plummet. The result is a substantial deficit for 2012 in spite of the very high millage of \$10.281. The Justice System accounts for 34.8% of the entire Fulton County General Fund Budget and Health & Human Services account for 26.5% for a total of 61.3%. Add this to the Grady Contribution (\$62,117,195) which accounts for 10.3%, the Information Technology (\$24,053,723) which accounts for 4% and the Office of the County Manager (\$11,242,843) which accounts for 1.8% the total is 77.4%! **During the worst recession since 1929, the taxpayers feel that a closer oversight of Fulton County governance is needed.**

In the 2011 budget, Fulton County used over \$106 million of reserves to balance its budget, leaving \$50 million for reserve. If this reserve remains untouched and Fulton County continues to use the standard reserve of 8.33% (operating costs for one month) the deficit for 2012 is projected to be \$30.3 million.

In 2005, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners appointed a fourteen member Blue Ribbon Commission on Fulton County Governance, Chaired by Dr. Robert J. Eger, III, of Georgia Tech. This Commission issued its report on January 31st, 2006, with a group of outstanding recommendations which were never implemented. The Taxpayers Foundation urges the Commissioners to reconsider the following recommendations of the Fulton County Blue Ribbon Commission on Fulton County Governance:

Privatizing Each County Service: *On page 18 of the Blue Ribbon Commission's Report it is recommended:* "The County Commission should consider privatizing each service and compare the cost of privatization with the cost of the County performing that service." The Reason Foundation (Leonard Gilroy, Director of Privatization) estimates privatization savings of 10%-30%, depending on the service.

Significantly Reducing Health & Human Service: *On page 19,* "The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that Fulton County should continue only those services that residents receive on a county-wide basis. Certain services needed by residents of a particular municipality may be requested and provided by an intergovernmental agreement. The current Fulton County Health System (\$51,509,994 including Mental Health) should be part of the statewide Department of Human Resources.

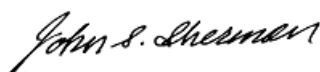
The 12 Health Centers located throughout the County should be reduced and a system of mobile clinics should be implemented to take the services where the people are.”

Reducing the High Cost of The Justice System: *Page 15 of the Fulton County Blue Ribbon Commission on Criminal Justice shows how the taxpayers of both the County and the City of Atlanta could reduce their taxes for the Justice System of Fulton County and Atlanta through the consolidation of the Fulton County Criminal Justice System with that of the City of Atlanta:* “The Criminal Justice System in Fulton County is unusually fragmented. There are City Courts and County Courts and multiple courts within the County system. There is a County Solicitor General and a County District Attorney, with separate offices, staffs and cases, though both have essentially the same responsibilities. There is a City Solicitor which also prosecutes some crimes within the City of Atlanta. There is a City Police, County Police, the County Marshall’s Office, and the County Sheriff’s Office. There are two pre-trial service agencies. The fragmentation and duplication are costly and counter-productive. They contribute significantly to the inefficiency, backlogs, and delays in case processing that everyone agrees are a huge problem system-wide. Cost containment may result from consolidation due to more efficient scheduling, better use of court and attorney time.”

The Blue Ribbon Commission Reports contain many other recommendations, all of which should be implemented without further delay. **The three mentioned above will significantly reduce the Fulton County Budget and Millage Rate. In the midst of the worst economic recession since 1929, the Taxpayers Foundation urges every property owner in Fulton County email the County Commissioners urging the implementation of these recommendations:**

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District 3, Liz Hausmann, liz.hausmann@fultoncountyga.gov
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