



Where Community Connects

CITY COUNCIL MILLAGE RATE PUBLIC HEARING #1 SUMMARY MINUTES

MONDAY, JULY 15, 2024 6:30 P.M.

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford At-Large
Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Berry – Council District 3
Councilmember Elton Alexander – Council District 5
Councilmember Yolanda Barber – Council District 4
Councilmember LaKeisha Gantt – Council District 1
Councilmember Alphonso Thomas – Council District 2

Administration

Frederick Gardiner – City Manager
Vanessa Holiday – City Clerk
Cassandra Lester – Deputy City Clerk
Lakeisha Gaines – Interim City Treasurer
Quinton Washington – City Attorney

Mission: To provide visionary leadership and superior municipal services that enhance the quality of life for citizens while creating a welcoming business atmosphere focused on sustainability and expansion of tourism and cultural events.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ford at 6:30 p.m.

Invocation by Mayor Pro Tem Berry

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

City Clerk, Vanessa Holiday was asked to proceed with a verbal roll call. All members were present.

Motion to adopt the Agenda was made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Mayor Ford read the Public Hearing Rules and Procedures

PUBLIC HEARING #1

1. Council Consideration of Millage Rate

Presented by Frederick Gardiner - City Manager

Mr. Gardiner confirmed that the millage rate that will be discussed tonight does not affect homeowners that do not reside within the city limits of Stockbridge; noted this is the first of three public hearings required, noting the city's property digest increased by 44%, and that it is a good practice to advertise a higher rate in the

event an adjustment needs to be made, additional hearing would not be required, and noted the advertisement last year was 6%, and this year the rate was advertised at 4.25%.

Mr. Gardiner presented an overview of the proposed Millage Rate, noting the growth of the city and impact of city services; reviewed the 2024 Property Tax Digest and 5-year History of Levy; reviewed the Property Tax Analysis report with examples of the appraised and the assessed value of homes and the tax increase based on a rollback millage rate of 3.61, the current millage rate of 3.77, and millage rates of 4.00, 4.15, 4.20 and 4.25; reviewed the Preliminary General Fund FY25 at a Glance report; noted the Tax Distribution by Government Entity and the percentage of tax with the City of Stockbridge at 3.77 mills (11.2%); Henry County Water Authority at 2 mills (5%); Henry County at 10.511 mills (26%); and the Henry County Board of Education at 23.628 mills (59%); and noted there are two more Millage Rate Public Hearings with the adoption at the final hearing on July 22nd; and noted there will be Referendum on the November 2024 Ballot to allow for a City of Stockbridge Homestead Exemption and city residents must apply with the City of Stockbridge as this exemption is separate from the Henry County Exemption.

Mayor Ford noted the Public Hearings are required since the city adopted a millage last year.

Mr. Gardiner clarified that is true if the city's Tax Digest increases.

Councilmember Alexander noted the Tax Statement and the different entities, and suggested homeowners attend the meetings of the School Board where the majority of the tax on the statement is assessed at 60% and the County where the tax on the statement is assessed at 26%.

Deputy Tax Commissioner, Lynn Carty confirmed the County has a frozen exemption in place that allows a property to be frozen at the rate when purchased, and noted the County will meet on July 30th at 1:00 p.m. regarding the millage, and the School Board will meet on July 22nd at 4:30 p.m. regarding the millage.

Public Hearing Opened

Speakers in Favor of No Millage Rate Increase:

Glenn Martin, Loretha Martin, Karen Charmaine, Claire Kellam, Sharon Nelson, and Eugenia Brown.

Speakers Opposed to Millage Rate: Jocelyn Williams

Mayor Ford noted the City of Stockbridge does not control appraisals and asked staff to adjust the questions that were raised.

Mr. Gardiner confirmed the Henry County Tax Assessor controls appraisals, and noted the city cannot control rentals, and that the investment companies are competing with homeowners, noting changes can only be made by the state legislature.

Mr. Gardiner noted residents are not paying a double tax, and that all homeowners in Henry County are required to pay for 1.09 mills for public safety, and that tax is now on the City of Stockbridge tax bill and has been removed from the Henry County portion of the tax bill.

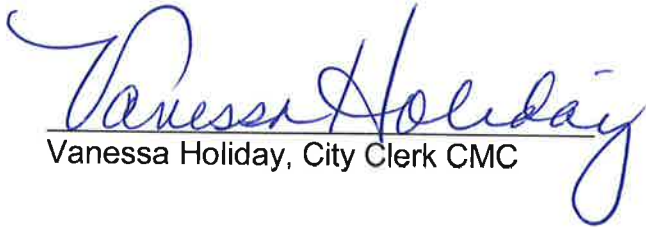
The City Clerk noted the (4) four Henry County cities collaborated with the County to assign meeting dates where both city and County staff could be in attendance, along with the governing body of each municipality.

Mr. Gardiner noted the Henry County Water Authority had recently issued a notice that water rates were increasing, noting the process cost to treat water.

Public Hearing Closed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. was made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk CMC


Anthony S. Ford, Mayor