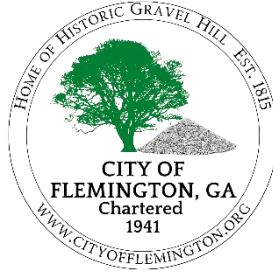


*"Preserving Our Heritage,
Shaping Our Future"*

Historic Home of Gravel Hill
Est. 1815

Paul Hawkins,
MAYOR



City Hall
156 Old Sunbury Rd.
Flemington, GA 31313

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SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES
Millage Rate Public Hearing #1
December 5th, 2024 AT NOON
FLEMINGTON CITY HALL ♦ 156 OLD SUNBURY RD

Present at City Hall: Mayor Paul Hawkins
Mayor Pro Tem ("MPT") David Edwards
Councilwoman Rene' Harwell (entered @ 12:02 p.m.)
Councilwoman Gail Evans
Councilman Hasit Patel
Councilwoman Leigh Smiley
Jenelle Gordon, City Clerk
LT Anthony Gallob, Liberty County Sheriff's Office ("LCSO")

Present via Phone: None

Absent: Councilman Larry Logan
Craig Stafford, City Attorney

1. The special called Public Hearing of the Council of the City of Flemington was called to order by Mayor Paul Hawkins on Thursday, December 5th, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. in the Council Room at Flemington City Hall. A quorum necessary to conduct business was visibly present.
2. Mayor Hawkins welcomed all attendees.
3. MPT Edwards provided a comprehensive introduction and overview of the city's history, current projects, and future initiatives.
4. Citizens opposed to the proposed millage rate conveyed the following comments:
 - Reservations that public hearings may be merely a formality, with citizen input potentially disregarded.
 - Concern regarding the potential loss of the city's small-town atmosphere.
 - Worry that Flemington may lose its unique identity.
 - Questioning about the fiscal responsibility of the city's purchase of four (4) acres of land in McLarry's Curve for \$975,000.
 - Inquiries regarding the financing arrangements for the four (4) acres in McLarry's Curve.
 - Several questions related to the utilization of nine (9) acres of land owned by the city across from City Hall.
 - Inquiries about the possibility of reducing services in order to lower the millage rate.
 - Questions regarding the rationale for implementing a 100% tax increase rather than starting with a smaller increment.

- Consideration of whether widowers or seniors on fixed incomes were taken into account during the calculation of the millage rate.
- Worries that active-duty soldiers may struggle to afford the additional tax burden.
- Concerns that the new tax may deter citizens from wanting to reside in Flemington.
- Suggestion to postpone the setting of the millage rate until after the opening of Publix.
- Questions regarding the possibility of increasing taxes on businesses instead of homeowners.
- Concerns about the number of new businesses opening in the area.
- Concerns regarding the condition of the city's roads.

5. Citizens neutral or in support of the proposed millage rate conveyed the following comments:

- The proposed millage rate is viewed as a 50/50. Not for, however, not against.
- Support exists for the tax to cover current expenses; however, there is resistance to using it to finance future downtown projects.
- There is a recognition of the necessity for the millage rate.

6. The Mayor and Council have collectively indicated the necessity for the city to adopt a millage rate in the near future. The growth of both residents and businesses has resulted in increased demands for maintaining city-provided services. Also, that steps are being implemented to preserve Flemington's unique identity.

As a point of note, the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), or sales tax, is expected to rise with the opening of Publix in the fall of 2025. However, these funds are pooled and allocated to municipalities based on population, underscoring the importance of completing your Census forms.

It was also clarified that, due to the absence of an established millage rate, a tax of \$1 would represent a 100% increase, as stipulated by legal requirements in public notices. The City actively applies for all eligible grants; however, due to Flemington's median income and the population size within the County, the City does not qualify as a disadvantaged or rural community. The Council encourages residents to reach out to the Liberty County Tax Assessor's office for inquiries regarding tax exemptions.

7. Mayor Hawkins adjourned the public hearing at 1:03 p.m.