

LAKE CITY, NEWS LETTER BRIEFING

March 2014



Fiscal 2014 promises to be a challenging year for Lake City and a promising one as well. We do not contemplate raising property taxes or user fees this fiscal year.

Over the course of the last 10 plus years the City has maintained an extremely austere budgeting process. By that it is meant that there was little if any monies allocated for investment in the

future, or for obsolescence planning let alone to focus on overall capital improvements in any given year.

The budgeting process only accommodated existing bare bones operations and its debt service.

In summary there had been no obsolescence planning or capital improvement planning.

As a result the following occurred:

- City employees do not have a pension plan unlike employees in other municipalities.
- City infrastructure is maintained but only marginally improved.
- City buildings with deferred maintenance are more expensive as time goes by.
- There has been no allocation for remodeling or expanding municipal facilities.
- There was severely outdated pay plans
- Updates in modern technology and communications systems were almost nonexistent.

Without appropriations to cure anticipated obsolescence via capital budgeting we have been behind the curve which is compounded by a history of zero growth in revenue.

It is essential that a more progressive taxing policy take place in the future. The problem is that property taxes are essentially the burden of commercial property owners versus residential property owners and this flies in the face of becoming “business friendly” when advocating economic growth

initiatives here in a manner to entice business development.

Every effort must be explored this fiscal year to develop legislation or other means to increase revenue but not placing the sole burden on commercial property owners. The bottom line is twofold: 1) The City must increase revenue. 2) Increased taxes must not be the sole burden of commercial property owners.

Without a revenue adjustment taking place beginning in 2015 the City will be in a difficult position as operational expenses increase while revenue remains static and investments in the future remain nonexistent as in the past.

A gracious “**THANK YOU**” is extended to all those who voted for the successful implementation of the **2009 SPLOST**.

It is contemplated that many of our capital improvements will be a function of SPLOST on the May 20th 2015 ballot. A sample of those major headings are illustrated below.

**CITY OF LAKE CITY, GA.
2014 SPLOST LIST
(Listed in prioritized order)**

- 1. Public Safety**
- 2. Municipal Center**
- 3. Public Works Dept.**
- 4. Sidewalks and Streets**
- 5. Phillips Dr. Park**

**Total Estimated SPLOST
Projects:
\$ 2,749,774.00**

The administration will be exploring an “**Amnesty Program**” this fiscal year whereby a short grace period will apply which forgives interest and penalties levied on delinquent property taxes if paid immediately.

Currently there is approximately \$133,000 worth of delinquent property taxes on the books as of September 30, 2013. In addition, we are anticipating Fines and Forfeitures to increase by approximately \$100,000.

There will be other sources of revenue and programs designed to increase efficiencies during this fiscal year to offset the aforementioned additional expenses.

Economic Development.

The City’s focus on becoming more "business friendly" and producing economic vitality and growth in Lake City will continue this fiscal year.

We hope to complete the Tri City Opportunity Zone which will provide tax credits for Lake City and our partners in Forest Park and Morrow this fiscal year.

Additionally, it would appear that other meaningful remodeling of the Lake City Market Place will have completed in addition to other businesses adding to their customer base together with more businesses relocating to Lake City.

We are hopeful that a new Waffle House will be constructed in the near future adjacent to the Sonic Burgers facility on Jonesboro Road.

We have established professional and meaningful relationships with key economic development personnel in Clayton County’s government and with Clayton State University with the hope of a coordinated approach for economic development here.

As a direct result of the City's efforts to maintain community infrastructure, improve public facilities, and streamline entitlement processes, commercial property owners and retailers are increasingly expressing enthusiasm to open new businesses in our community.

We are proud of the new website which will be circulated far and wide as a means to acquaint both businesses and potential residents of our quaint City with its forward thinking City Council and friendly culture as a place to reside.

THIS AND THAT

A separate survey will be included in the June Newsletter to determine the names of those who have been married for 50 years and more. On August 15th there will be ceremony at the Community Center to celebrate that milestone.

The Annual Clean Up Day is scheduled April 12th from 8:00AM to 4:30PM at the Lake City Public Works building at 5535 North Parkway.

A shredder will be on site from 9:00 to 1:00 PM.

Please bring photo ID as proof of residency.

REMINDERS:

Garbage, Recyclables, leaves and limbs are for **Friday pickups only.**

Grass cuttings should not be blown into the street gutters because they clog the storm drains and reservoirs.

B. Williams, W. Oswalt, D. Ginn, Y. Kelly, JB Sowell

