

Haywood County “Toeprints”

May 18, 2017

Vol. #8 Issue #1 (Subject: Revaluation, Revenue Neutral Tax Increase, CES.)

www.haywoodtp.net

What’s Happening?

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Haywood County Taxpayers of what transpires at the bi-monthly County Commission Meetings. This newsletter will be written from the perspective of a casual observer, myself. Any opinions expressed will be mine.

Revaluation.

The county Revaluation was summarized with a presentation by **David Francis** to the county commissioners back on 2/20/2017.

(See: <http://haywoodtp.net/pubII/170220Feb20Reapp.pdf>)

[**Editors Note:** This presentation should have been given by Judy Hickman, Haywood County Tax Assessor]. **Francis** stated that there was a decrease in property values from 2016 to 2017. This is coming from the guy with the ever increasing spread sheet of Property Values, with the only way to alter his spreadsheet value downwards was for a house to burn down. He stated:

2016 Value \$6,312,527,423

2017 Value \$6,179,746,629

Decrease of \$132.8 Million, or -2.1%.

(That’s a lot of houses burning down).

Vicki Hyatt, the liberal hack news editor of the Mountaineer attempted to come to the rescue of **Francis** with a Fake News article. Her FAKE NEWS Hit Piece is entitled -

Property values rise in Haywood, By Vicki Hyatt, Feb 24, 2017, or

<http://themountaineer.villagesoup.com/p/property-values-rise-in-haywood/1627056>

Waynesville — At its Monday meeting, the Haywood County Board of Commissioners learned the value of all real property in Haywood County has been adjusted to its current market price, a number that has **increased** slightly overall in the county.

The value of property in Haywood is \$6.3 billion, **up 2 percent from the pre-reappraisal values**, said David Francis, county tax administrator. The county gained \$76 million in property value thanks to 322 new construction units in 2015-16.

Of the 47,960 parcels reviewed, 6,262 did not change in value; 14,481 increased in value and 27,217 decreased in value, Francis said. The new values were determined by the market transactions that reflect actual sales price. ...

Up 2%?

Fast forward to Monday’s County Commission meeting on 5/15/2017, where **Ira Dove** presented the 2017-2018 proposed budget to county commissioners. (See:

<http://haywoodtp.net/pubII/170515BudgetPresentationFY17-18final.pdf>

We have a whole brand new set of 2016 and 2017 property Reappraisal Values! I can’t help but feel that someone is cooking the books to fit their needs with this budget.

2016 Value \$6,777,147,601

2017 Value \$6,610,122,490

Decrease of \$167.0 Million, or -2.5%.

What the ... ?

Ira Dove continued with his presentation. I’ll tell you, folks, **Ira** should get the award for the best snake oil salesman in Haywood County. **Ira** casually brought up “Revenue Neutral Tax”, beat around the bush, and never really said he and **Julie Davis** intended on using that mechanism as a way to increase property tax revenue for this budget. It was **Kirkpatrick** that finally confessed that they were going to get blamed for a tax increase.

Newspapers, again laying cover for county commissioners, indicated that the shortfall in funds [re: [www.haywoodtp.net Haywood County Public Library Survey #2 Results](http://www.haywoodtp.net/Haywood%20County%20Public%20Library%20Survey%20Results). 714 responded out of 4500 surveys. 58% want new Property Tax to support improvements. [Kirk Kirkpatrick indicated the county is in the hole -\\$1.3M already this year due to lower property Revaluation](http://www.haywoodtp.net/Kirk%20Kirkpatrick%20indicated%20the%20county%20is%20in%20the%20hole%20-%20$1.3M%20already%20this%20year%20due%20to%20lower%20property%20Revaluation). 4/11/2017. 4/13/2017...] indicated commissioners would cover the shortfall by drawing from the Fund Balance.

County commissioners never miss an opportunity to raise taxes. The Ad Valorem tax rate was raised from .5661 to .5850 per \$100, or an increase of 3.339% as part of this Budget Proposal.

Here is an exercise you can do. A “What If?” calculation.

Everyone received a notice indicating the new valuation of your property. Some values went up, others went down, compared to the previous valuation. Mine happened to go down 5%.

- Calculate your tax based on .5661
- Calculate your tax based on .5850

Here is what I found.

I would have had a tax bill that was about \$36 less this year than last, if there had not been a tax increase. Rather, my tax bill is now about \$13 less than last year.

If your property value dropped greater than -3.339%, you will pay less tax than last year.

If your property value dropped less than -3.339%, or increased in value, you pay more in tax.

So folks whose property increased get a double whammy, more tax due to the tax increase, and more tax due to the higher value.

What’s in this Budget.

There are several major increases in this year’s budget:

- New mandated voting machines,
- Additional Funding Formula increase for schools,
- Additional funding for the Sheriff’s Office.

I have always supported additional funding for schools and the Sheriff’s Office and Law Enforcement.

I don’t see why these additional expenses could not have been supported by the Fund Balance.

As you can see when you review **Ira Doves** presentation, it appears as though he and **Julie Davis** went on a spending spree. The problem I have is that there was no apparent effort to trim or clean up deadwood in the county. Rather automatically include those in the budget, leaving the emotionally charged and sensitive issues until last, and whine when **Ira** or the commissioners say “We can’t take these things out!” This is the list that **Ira Dove** went through in his presentation, (appearing on page 49 of his presentation) saying all these this will disappear unless we implement the Revenue Neutral Tax Increase. He might as well have thrown in Motherhood, Apple Pie and Baseball.

Ira Dove is very polished with this presentation, as he has been doing it for years.

This budget is set in concrete now, and nothing will change, unless there is some major accounting error someplace.

These people will continue to raise taxes at every opportunity. It is up to us to hold these commissioners feet to the fire. Does anyone ever think that this new tax rate (.5850 per \$100) will ever go down?

CES

Well, well, well. Looks like the Haywood County School Administration will finally be moving out of the dilapidated Old Hospital after all and moving into new digs at CES. What a coincidence.

But wait?

What ever happened to the Solid Waste Guy that was in charge of selling/improving/whatever the old hospital - **David Francis**? He has certainly gone dark recently, and that is not a bad thing.

Solid Waste Budget

This is the first time that I have seen an accounting of **David Francis**’ slush fund, the Solid Waste Budget. It appears on page 43 of **Ira Dove**’s presentation.

Back when the Francis Farm Landfill was causing all kinds of problems with DENR, David Francis proposed an increase in the “Availability Fee” for the millions anticipated expenses for Francis Farm. It is extremely difficult getting any accounting from David Francis, but it certainly does not look like Francis Farm has been the money pit it was supposed to be. Funds appear to be diverted now to upgrading the local drop-off locations. Here is another tax that will never go down, as there will always be new projects to spend the money on.

See: [\\$92 \\$164 Availability Fee - 78.3% Increase. David Francis, Tax Administrator, appointed by Kevin Ensley, Mark Swanger and other commissioners, is applying band-aid after band-aid at Francis Farm Landfill. What does a Tax Administrator know about LandFill remediation? Power Point Budget Presentation. 5/19/2015...](#)

or

<http://haywoodtp.net/pubII/150518BudgetPresentationFY15-16ppfinal.pptx>

Legend: If any name is in **bold**, it can’t be a good thing.

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Si vis pacem, para bellum