



MEDIA CONTACTS

[Andrew Cauthen](#)

Communications Manager
404-371-2806 (o)
470-553-4408 (c)

[Suzanne Forte](#)

Public Information Officer
404-371-2709 (o)
470-512-0148 (c)

[Leslie Agee](#)

Digital Media Specialist
404-371-2706 (o)
404-387-5241 (c)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DeKalb County Adopts Fiscal Year 2019 Budget
*Board of Commissioners approves CEO Thurmond
spending priorities*

DECATUR, Ga. – Today, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners adopted CEO Michael Thurmond’s proposed \$1.3 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2019 that includes a \$112 million rainy-day fund and addresses unfunded pension fund liabilities. All planned expenditures are funded by FY2019 revenues. The final vote was 6-1 in favor of the amended budget proposal.

“We continue to work to earn the public’s trust by being fiscally responsible, and by increasing efficiencies and customer service,” said DeKalb CEO Michael Thurmond. “The approved budget was developed in collaboration with the Board of Commissioners to continue improving the quality of life of citizens in DeKalb.”

Agreement was reached on major spending priorities including:

- A two percent cost-of-living adjustment for the county’s retirees and beneficiaries. The annualized cost of the adjustment is \$2.1 million. Additionally, \$9 million will be appropriated to strengthen contributions to DeKalb’s employee pension fund and is projected to fully fund it by 2043. A \$12 million pension fund loan used to finance a controversial early buyout plan for veteran employees in 2010 will be paid off 20 years ahead of schedule, resulting in a savings of \$14.7 million in principal and interest payments.
- The annualization of a 4 percent pay raise for public safety personnel including police, fire, E-911, Sheriff’s Department and other county investigators.
- A 3 percent pay raise for all county employees who did not receive the public safety pay raise. The budget also establishes a \$15 per hour minimum wage for county employees.
- 104 additional police positions and 60 new firefighter positions.
- Two contract compliance officers that will ensure that all purchasing and contracting processes and procedures are adhered to.
- \$470,000 for the purchase and installation of a trash trap on the South River and \$150,000 for a countywide anti-litter campaign.
- A partnership with the DeKalb Board of Health and other organizations to design interventions to improve child well-being, with a focus on violence prevention.

The first full year of the Equalized Homestead Option Sales Tax (EHOST) in 2019 will provide \$119 million in residential property tax relief, an increase of \$10 million from 2018. In 2019, EHOST will provide a total rollback of the county operations and hospital millage rates. Tax relief for an owner of a \$250,000 home would be approximately \$900.

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