



Gwinnett County Government Communications Division NEWS RELEASE

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MANDATORY 90-DAY VACANCY PERIOD EXPECTED TO SAVE \$2.2 MILLION

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Feb. 22, 2011) – In a move projected to save at least \$2.2 million this year, the Gwinnett County Commission voted today to require that all vacant positions be held open for a minimum of 90 days. The action has the practical effect of extending a general hiring freeze that has been in place since August 2008 for all positions reporting to the County Administrator.

The action is part of an ongoing effort to close an \$18 million gap between budgeted expenditures and projected revenues. With the adoption of this plan, \$1.8 million of the projected savings will occur in the general fund. Combined with a recent decision to raise county ambulance transport fees to cover actual costs plus the sale of right-of-way to the state transportation department, the budget gap now stands at approximately \$14.4 million.

Beyond the actual cost savings, county officials said the 90-day hiring freeze on all vacancies directs county department directors and managers to re-examine the need to fill vacant positions and determine whether the work could be reassigned among other departmental employees. County Administrator Glenn Stephens said, “These challenging economic times have presented those of us in government a tremendous opportunity to more closely examine our priorities and to find new ways to innovate with the goal of becoming a more efficient, more effective organization.”

“These are difficult times,” said Commission Vice Chair Shirley Lasseter. “Gwinnett County families and businesses are having to tighten their belts and do more with less. County government can be no different.

“At the same time,” she added, “we cannot and will not compromise the county’s ability to deliver essential public services that the people of Gwinnett County expect and depend upon. Since 2008, we have reduced the county’s overall workforce through reductions in force, retirement incentives, and the elimination of certain vacant position. We want to continue reducing our workforce where it makes sense, but we do not want to cripple our operations or

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undermine our ability to meet the public's needs. This approach gives us a mechanism to encourage department directors to evaluate, over a finite period of time, whether vacant positions are needed before seeking to refill them.”

The resolution also gives Stephens authority to grant exceptions to the 90-day vacancy requirement. “We recognize there will be times and situations where it will be necessary and in the larger public interest to go ahead and fill a vacancy immediately,” Lasseter said.

Currently, the county government has 210 vacant positions that have been approved and funded for the 2011 fiscal year. Holding them open for 90 days would generate the \$2.2 million in payroll and benefits savings. County officials said new vacancies would no doubt occur during the year, resulting in further savings.

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