



Attorney/Legal Fees Run Rampant in Tax Assessors Office

How was it possible in a year where Hall County implemented unpaid furlough days, a hiring freeze, a halt to all capital purchases, stopped contributing to employee retirement accounts and eliminated cost of living increases your HALL COUNTY TAX ASSESSORS had an extraordinary amount of salary funds redirected to pay legal fees?

Hall County Citizens For Efficient Government

YOUR HALL COUNTY TAX ASSESSORS SPENT **\$145,156** FOR LEGAL FEES IN FY2010 WITH ONLY **\$11,000 APPROVED** IN THEIR FY 2010 LEGAL BUDGET.

\$37,508 HAS BEEN SPENT IN THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF FY 2011 WITH ONLY **\$11,000 BUDGETED** FOR ATTORNEY/LEGAL FEES FOR THE ENTIRE 12 MONTHS.

INVOICES

GREENE REAL ESTATE SERV INC	06-15-2010	\$4800.00
GREENE REAL ESTATE SERV INC	12-15-2010	\$9200.00
SMITH, GILLIAM, WILLIAMS, MILES	05-25-2010	\$43220.04
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST LLP	02-12-2010	\$5786.50
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST LLP	03-12-2010	\$4786.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	04-15-2010	\$939.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	05-17-2010	\$7791.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	06-25-2010	\$5614.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	07-15-2010	\$812.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	08-16-2010	\$1781.67
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	09-17-2010	\$4432.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	10-15-2010	\$2084.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	11-15-2010	\$5657.00
STEWART, MELVIN, FROST, LLP	12-30-2010	\$6112.93
GRAND TOTAL-		\$182,666.93

ACCUMULATE WHEN VALUES WERE

WHO ALLOWED THIS FY2010 & FY2011 18 MONTH OVER RUN OF **\$ 160,664?**

HOW COULD THIS AMOUNT OF LEGAL COST ACCUMULATE WHEN VALUES WERE NOT UPDATED?

AROUND THE STATE...

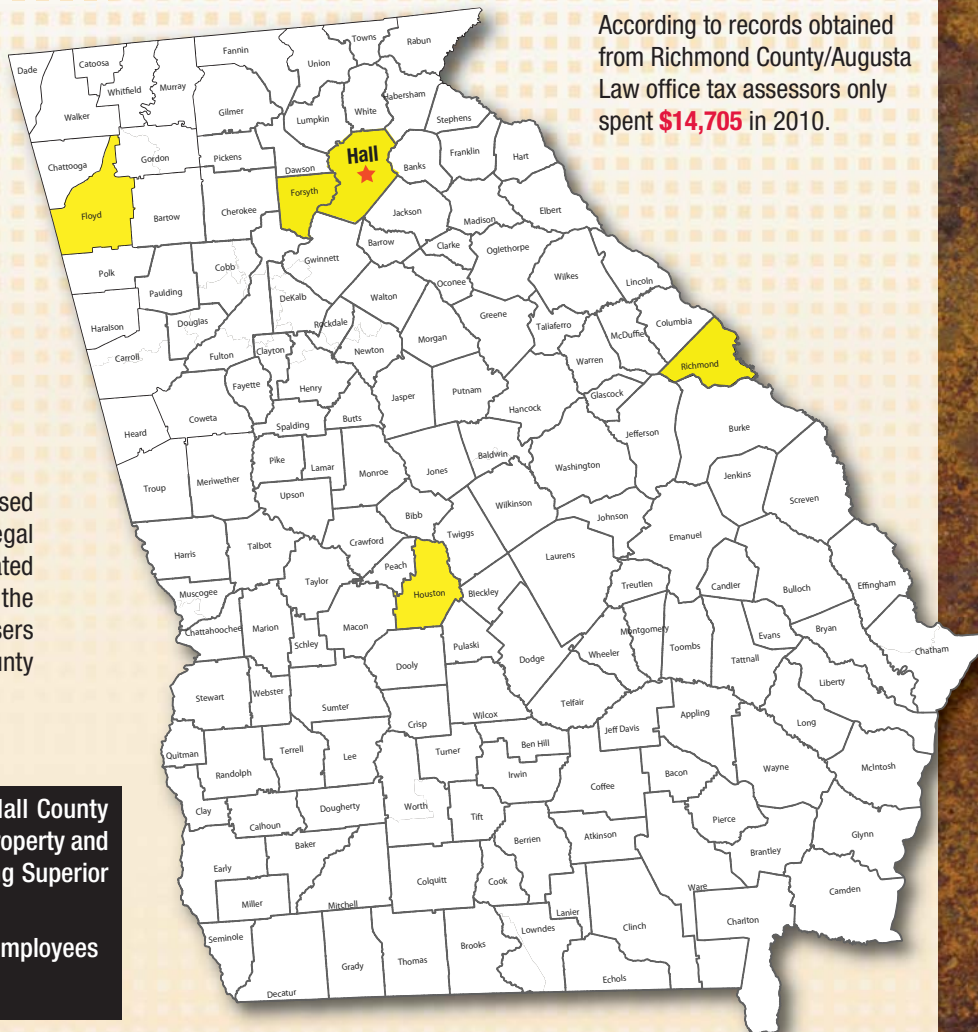
William Mcwhorter, Floyd County chief appraiser, advised only **\$16,079** was spent on legal services in calendar 2010.

According to records obtained from the Forsyth County Finance Department, tax assessors spent **\$48,943** in 2010.

Steve Engle, Houston County, advised only **\$2,090** in calendar 2010 legal charges were spent. He further stated that all appeals were handled by the Cases not handled by the appraisers were handled by the Houston County Board of Equalization.

As of February 15th 2011 The Hall County Tax Assessors have 4 Personal Property and 16 Real Property Division pending Superior Court Cases.

At what cost will this be to the employees and citizens of Hall County?



According to records obtained from Richmond County/Augusta Law office tax assessors only spent **\$14,705** in 2010.

Jury lowers Hall County property appraisals

Group appealed 2009 assessments on 58 empty lots

By Stephen Gurr - April 23, 2010 12:25 a.m.

A Hall County jury this week overturned the Hall County Board of Tax Assessors' appraised values of 58 vacant lots at a Braselton subdivision in a court case that the plaintiffs believe should set a precedent for similar appraisals.

The board expressed satisfaction with the verdict, however, which reduced the appraised value of the lots in dispute by 16 to 21 percent.

Homans said the board members were in the courtroom when the jury came back late Wednesday. "They were satisfied with the verdict," Homans said.

"If the tax assessors don't change their method, there will be another appeal filed," Gilliam said.

What The Times didn't report....

The case ultimately cost Hall County approximately \$68,000.00 in legal fees due to Hall County losing the case in SUPERIOR COURT by a valuation reduction exceeding 15% of appraised value which required Hall County to pay NORTH GEORGIA GROWTH Fund legal fees as well as their own.

AVOIDABLE WASTE

TAX ASSESSORS 101

Hall County Commission
4 commissioners 1 at large

Board of Tax Assessors - Appointed
Hall County Commission

The Board of Tax Assessors is a five member body of appointed citizens of Hall County, serving on a part time basis, who meet twice monthly unless otherwise posted. They are appointed by the Hall County Board of Commissioners and operate **autonomously**. A Chairman, and Secretary are elected on an annual basis.

Current Board Members and monthly salary

Whit Powell, Jr. - Chair- \$450 Robert Hulsey - \$400
 Jeff Benefield - \$400 Berlinda Lipscomb - \$400
 Victoria Cook - \$400

Tax Commissioner - Elected
Keith Echols

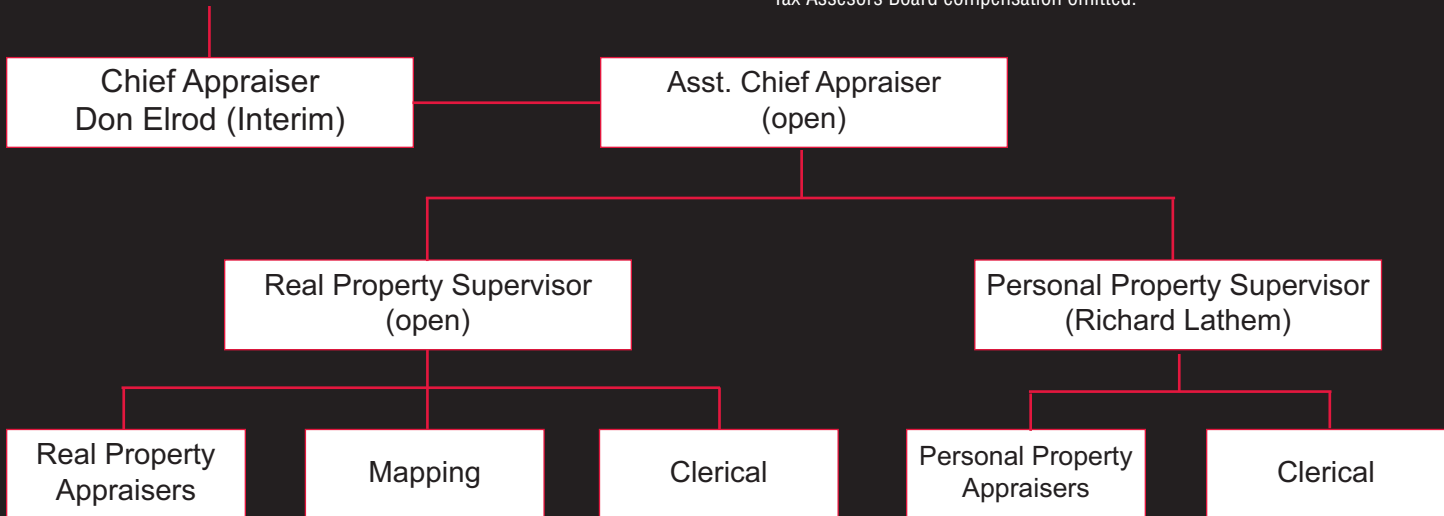
This is an elected position who's sole responsibility is for the collecting of Personal, Real and Ad valorem taxes.

3 Offices - Clermont, Gainesville, Oakwood

2011 TAX ASSESSORS BUDGET*

	SALARY	F.I.C.A.	HEALTH INS.	LIFE INS.
PERSONNEL	961,608.44	73,563.04	219,400.00	4,117.94
EXPENSES	186,609.00	TOTAL BUDGET \$1,445,298.42		

*Figures include departments 109,110 and 25 budgeted employee positions
Tax Assessors Board compensation omitted.



Who Is Hall County Citizens For Efficient Government?

Hall County Citizens for Efficient Government is an organization that holds county government accountable to the Hall County taxpayers and ensures that your tax dollars are used in an efficient manner kept at an affordable level and used to provide quality services.

If you believe in the Constitution, free market principles, and the values that make our country great; liberty, freedom, opportunity to succeed without government intrusion, we then encourage your involvement in Hall County Citizens for Efficient Government.

Your support is an investment in the future of Hall County.

www.hccfeg.org