

# Voices for Rockdale Fact Check Sheet

## Tax Burden Concerns

### **1. Increase in annual spending**

Rockdale County Annual Budget

2018	\$ 67,421,589
2019	\$ 68,720,084
2020	\$ 74,912,725
2021	\$ 79,511,074
2022	\$ 83,820,244
2023	\$ 93,977,262
2024	\$110,993,213

Source: <https://www.rockdalecountyga.gov/budget/>  
Scroll down and click on the Annual Budgets folder

### **2. Cost of Judicial and Administration Complex**

- a. \$110,000,000 Bonds
- b. \$ 20,000,000 SPLOST
- c. \$ 10,000,000 General Fund

Currently the cost for the Judicial and Administration Complex is \$140,000,000. If the cost rises; the additional burden will be on you as a Rockdale County taxpayer.

Per Legal notice on Wednesday, December 20, 2023; no cap on tax amount to be levied on all property in Rockdale County to pay for the \$110,000,000 bonds.

Source: Rockdale Citizen Newspaper Wednesday, December 20, 2023

(d) levy an annual ad valorem property tax, unlimited as to rate or amount, on all property in the County subject to such tax in order to make such Contract Payments

### **3. Lawsuits and Insurance cost**

- a. Cost of EEOC complaints and lawsuits from former employees; settlements total more than \$750,000.00.  
Source: Rockdale Citizen
- b. Cost of liability insurance has increased from \$293,667 to more than \$1.4 million.

County's insurance carrier has paid more than \$4.9 million in claims.

Source: ACCG Report

### **4. Salary increases**

Current Board of Commissioners unanimously voted on February 29, 2024, to give themselves a pay raise; after already receiving a \$5,000 pay raise in 2022 and a \$2,000 cost of living adjustment in July 2023.

Board of Commission Chair, Oz Nesbitt current salary \$128,752.26; new salary \$155,883.68. Post 1 Commissioner (Part time), Sherri Washington current salary \$35,928.36; new salary \$42,189.46. Post 2 Commissioner (Part time), Doreen Williams current salary \$36,001.94; new salary \$42,263.04

Source: Rockdale Citizen Wednesday, March 6, 2024

### **5. Prime Real Estate**

County is purchasing prime real estate in Rockdale County which removes it from the tax digest.

### **6. Ethical Concerns**

#### **a. Commissioner Sherri Washington**

Georgia Supreme Court disbarred Commissioner Sherri Washington. Court found Washington knowingly violated her duties to three different clients which resulted in serious or potentially serious harm to all three.

Source Fox 5 News June 28, 2022

#### **b. Chair Oz Nesbitt**

- 1. Revocation of law enforcement certification. Source: Rockdale Citizen

2. Alleged sexually offensive video sent to a female employee's cell phone which resulted in a \$141,653.98 settlement. Source: Rockdale Citizen January 22, 2024
3. Hostile work environment sited by previous employee; received a severance package that included a lump sum payment of six months of \$105,000 salary and 155 days pay for personal time off. Total paid \$60,334.74.  
Source: Rockdale Citizen April 11, 2021, Updated May 19, 2022.

## **7. High Density Developments**

- a. Chairperson of the Conyers-Rockdale Planning Commission by unanimous motion of all members of the Conyers-Rockdale Planning Commission sent a letter to the Rockdale County Board of Commissioner Chair Oz Nesbitt, Commissioner Sherri Washington, Commissioner Doreen Williams and to the City of Conyers Mayor Evans and all Council members advising a moratorium on multi-family housing. The planning commission cited concerns for sewer capacity and impact on our schools. Multi-family housing while offers another viable and good option for residential living should not encroach on previously zoned commercial and industrial sites. In their letter to our elected representatives, they cited an article published in the March 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Rockdale Citizen title "Is Rockdale County becoming a townhouse community?" Our current Board of Commissioners did not act on this recommendation.
- b. High density development not only is an impact on our schools, water, and sewer systems; it also imposes a greater impact on safety; first responders, fire, and traffic congestion.
- c. Concerns for public health such as hospital beds and response time for 911/EMS calls.

## **8. Infrastructure**

Our current Board of Commissioners continue to blame previous administrations for our failing water and sewer pipes. Chairman Oz Nesbitt has served (2) four-year terms as Post 1 Commissioner and is currently serving his second four-year term as Chairman; for a total of 16 years. Commissioner Washington took office as Post 1 Commissioner January 2017 and Commissioner Williams took office as Post 2 Commissioner January 2015. **When do they stop blaming previous administrations?**  
Source: Rockdale County Website

## **9. Shop The Rock?**

As residents of Rockdale County, we are constantly encouraged to "Shop the Rock." This is a great motto but what message is our current leadership sending to us when they do not "Shop the Rock"? Our current Board of Commissioners have hosted leadership/teaching events outside of our county. We have facilities in our county that have ample space to accommodate these events. Over the years our current Board of Commissioners have spent:

- a. 2021 Board of Commissioners Retreat held in Braselton, GA Chateau Elan \$24,449.53.00
- b. 2022 T.E.A.C.H Retreat held in Greenville, SC Embassy Suites \$24,980.00
- c. **2022 Board of Commissioners Retreat held in Conyers, GA Costley Mill Park \$1,246.79**
- d. 2023 B.R.I.D.G.E Retreat held in Peachtree City, GA Crowne Plaza \$18,000.00
- e. 2023 Rockdale County Leadership Retreat held in Columbus, GA Marriott Columbus \$11,538.24
- f. 2024 T.E.A.C.H Retreat to be held in Macon, GA Hotel Forty Five; estimated \$8,060.00

The only event held in Rockdale County was the 2022 BOC Retreat held at Costley Mill Park.

## **10. Rockdale County Schools**

Only 23% of elementary students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 15% tested at or above that level for math. Only 35% of middle school students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 15% tested at or above that level for math. And only 39% of high school students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 20% tested at or above that level for math. High School graduation rate is 81.4%. Projected total revenue for 2024 \$200,028,006.00.

Source: US News World Report & Rockdale County Public Schools

**In closing, you can influence positive change.**

**VOTE in the General Primary May 21, 2024 (election day)**

**Early in person voting begins April 29, 2024 and ends May 17, 2024**

Source: Rockdale County Board of Elections