Who We Are: A Lean, Disciplined Rural City
- Wauchula is a small, rural city with limited revenue options
- Same number of employees as ten years ago, no new departments or programs added
- Services such as engineering, planning advisory services & IT are outsourced to control costs
- Deliberate tax restraint: Since 2020, taxable values increased 61%, while ad valorem revenue increased only 48% due to roll-back rate decisions
- Overall General Fund growth held to only 25% since 2020, despite rising costs and mandates

General Fund Snapshot (FY 2025–26)
- Total General Fund: $5.83 million
- Police Department: $2.19 million (38%)

Primary General Fund Revenues:
- Utility Fund Transfer: $2.1 million
- Ad Valorem (Property Tax): $1.25 million
- Sales Tax: $984,000 (declined ~1% since FY 2021–22)

Wauchula does not have tourism taxes, a large commercial base, or major retail to supplement these revenues.

What Has Changed Since 2020: Cost Pressures to Maintain Services
- Property insurance: +80%
- Police vehicle costs: +51%
- Heavy equipment (backhoe): +34%
- Health insurance: +30%
- Wages: +17%, reflecting state-mandated minimum wage increases (+73%)

These increases are driven by market conditions, inflation, and mandates—not new programs or staffing growth.

Property Tax Proposal Impacts

Proposal	Estimated Annual Impact to Wauchula
HJR 201 / 203	–$443,769
HJR 205	–$46,000+
HJR 207	–$66,000+
HJR 211	Minimal initially; erodes tax base over time
HJR 213	Likely similar in scale to HJR 201 / 203

Why This Matters for Rural Communities
- Rural cities cannot replace lost revenue with tourism or rapid growth
- Ad valorem revenue does not cover law enforcement costs today
- Consolidation does not produce savings without reduced service levels

For rural cities like Wauchula, large property tax reductions create structural revenue losses that limit our ability to maintain and modernize core services over time.