

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON MARCH 2, 2010 AT 6:30 PM
IN THE BEN HILL COUNTY COUTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Philip C. Jay, III	Chairman
O. D. Netter	Vice Chairman
Scott Downing	Commissioner
Kathy Davis	Commissioner
Toni Sawyer	Attorney
Paula J. Jones	County Manager
Trish Beard	Deputy Clerk

Chairman Philip C. Jay, III called the meeting to order.

Christina Stepherson gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to suspend the portion of the County meetings Ordinance 2-192, that states that every Commissioner must address the chair and not each other also to suspend 2-195 which will allow the Commissioner's to address public speakers. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Constitutional Officers/Department Heads reports: NONE

Department Head Reports:

Extension Director Scott Carlson reported on budget cuts for UGA, these budget cuts will have an impact on our young people in schools. The proposed budget cuts will affect the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences which will eliminate all 4-H programs in the State, including the 4-H camps. Mr. Carlson urged everyone to call their State Representatives to express their concerns for the 4-H program.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss the 4-H situation in a little more detail. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

County Manager Paula Jones reported that Ben Hill County is in complete compliance with NIMS training. This training is required to receive FEMA funding. We are looking at replacing our current phone system with out any added expense to the budget we have sat through several presentations and hope to make a decision soon. The multi-service building should be empty within the month at which time we will determine its fate. This will save us money on utilities, building maintenance, liabilities and insurance. We have a meeting scheduled with Dave Wills to discuss our personnel policy in the near future.

Commissioner Scott Downing suggested that we add NIMS training to our personnel policy as a requirement.

Annexation Request

L.E. Harper – 182 Haile Booker Rd. – rezoned from R-15 County to R-15 City

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the annexation request for L.E. Harper. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public comments were heard as follows:

Francise Sneed along with her sister from Jacksonville, FL, sister in-law (deceased's wife) from Fitzgerald, Ga, and two daughters from Fitzgerald, Ga, requested for the Commission to Forgive Penalties and interest on her brother Mr. Southerland's (deceased) property taxes. Ms. Sneed stated that the family did not know that his taxes had not been paid and they want to keep the property in the family. Commissioner Scott Downing asked if they planned on paying the taxes up in full, minus the penalties and interest. She stated that they had written a letter and asked to be allowed to make payments on the owed taxes, of which she quoted as being \$8,579.46. Commissioner Kathy Davis asked if the property was paid for. She stated that as far as she knows the property is paid for.

Joann Lafavor talked about the tax amnesty idea; she stated that she would rather see people make payments on their owed taxes instead of just forgiving them. Citizens that are paying their taxes will not have to pay higher taxes.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated that the law requires the Commissioners to hear case to case basis regarding owed and back taxes.

Chairman Philip Jay recognizes comments from Ms. Sneed, she would like to know how and who will be contacting her and her family on the tax matter. County Manager Paula Jones will contact Ms. Sneed when a decision has been made.

County Manager Paula Jones asked Ms. Sneed for their phone numbers and address', so that she could contact them.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter stated that recent cases in the past, Commissioners had not been forgiving of the penalties and interest owed. He stated that these figures were included in their payment plans.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated that if there are cases with negligence involved, they should never have made it to the Commission board, which is in the law. Commissioner Scott Downing asked Attorney Toni Sawyer to read the law in question.

Attorney Toni Sawyer stated the laws regarding taxes and amnesty. The law states that it is required by the Tax Commissioner to make the decision on owed and back taxes on a case to case basis. Then he or she should take the recommendation to the Commissioners for final review.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to send tax situations to the Tax Commissioner and allow her to make recommendations then the tax situations will be brought to the Commission for final review, the decision will be sent to the tax payer by an official letter from the Commissioner's. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Acceptance of prior month's minutes:

Chairman Philip Jay made a motion to approve meeting minutes from February 1, 2010 at 3:00 PM. Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kathy Davis made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 1, 2010 at 4:00 PM with amendments to specify back taxes on the individuals mobile homes. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to approve the second part of the February 1, 2010 at 4:00 PM with the same amendments as above. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 2, 2010 Commission meeting. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from February 3, 2010 meeting. Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from February 22, 2010 at 2:00 PM. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from February 22, 2010 at 3:00 PM. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Old Business

Criminal Ordinances

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the amended ordinances, reflecting the change to violations and punishments to show 60 days and \$1,000 fine, article 2 of Chapter 59. Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to amend the agenda to talk about taxes. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Tax Amnesty

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to not do the tax amnesty program. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman O.D. Netter made a motion to continue discussion with tax policies and how we will collect back taxes. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

New Business

Department of Leisure expiring term – Bobby Chasteen

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to re-nominate Judge Bobby Chasteen to the Department of Leisure Board of directors.

Attorney Toni sawyer updated Commission on the Kingsland water Club. She stated that their license has been revoked and they are no longer active. There is only one person from the group still living and that is Jasper Stewart.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

_____ Philip C. Jay, III, Chairman

_____ Paula J. Jones, County Clerk