

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON FEBRUARY 7, 2012 AT 6:30 PM IN THE
BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Philip Jay III	Chairman
OD Netter	Vice-Chairman
Scott Downing	Commissioner
Bennie Calloway	Commissioner
Kathy Davis	Commissioner
Frank Feild	County Manager
Donna Lampkin	County Clerk
Toni Sawyer	County Attorney

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

Reverend Gene Thomas gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to relax the rules on addressing the Chairman, Commissioners, and the public. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Kathy Davis, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Kathy Davis, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Public Comments:

Holice Barton addressed the Commissioner with concerns of the noise that the HideAway Club and Club Hurricane create on Frank Road every weekend and the shooting that goes on between 12 AM and 1 AM. He stated that someone from the Pierce Circle community calls the police every weekend for these reasons. He presented a petition signed by the residents of that area asking the Commissioners to enforce the noise ordinance. He also stated that the scrap metal plant that is nearby leaves screws in the road that causes flat tires on a consistent basis.

Cherryl Griner read a letter of concern to the Commissioners about the Animal Control Ordinances. In the letter, she mentions the stray dogs that are running loose in her neighborhood and the Animal Control Officer not responding to attend to the problem.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to extend Cherryl Griner time to address the Commissioners. Commissioner Kathy Davis seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Kathy Davis, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Cherryl Griner stated she would like the dog ordinances to be fair and consistent for everyone. She continued with statistics on other breeds of dogs that have attacked and killed humans. She also mentioned the potential ordinances that will cause pet owners to purchase insurance on their pets. Cheryl expressed her love for her pet and that she is a responsible pet owner.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Kathy Davis made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes held on January 3, 2012. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Kathy Davis, Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Kathy Davis made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on January 9, 2012. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Kathy Davis, Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Kathy Davis made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting minutes held on January 9, 2012. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Kathy Davis, Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Kathy Davis made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on January 18, 2012. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Kathy Davis, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion. Commissioner Scott Downing abstained from the vote.

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Elected Officials and Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report

County Manager Frank Feild gave an update on the budget process. He stated that we are still in the process of reconciling the accounting periods for 2011 to insure our financial picture is accurate before he propose a new budget for 2012.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application:

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve Mary Smith rezoning application. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Kathy Davis, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Alcohol Application: NONE

Old Business

Transform Health

The District Manager Laura Busbin presented the Commissioners with a presentation that explained the saving by using Transform Health program and how the company operates in the Ben Hill County Detention Center.

New Business

EMA Grant Applications

EMA Director Jason Miller asked the Commissioners for permission to apply for two zero cash match grants through Homeland Security that are available to Ben Hill County. The first grant will provide a 190 foot tower with a generator and the second grant is for five message boards and a trailer.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to give EMA Director Jason Miller permission to apply for the Homeland Security grants. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion, which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Kathy Davis, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report:

Vice-Chairman OD Netter reported while he was in Atlanta at the Capitol Conference he had a chance to meet with Representative Jay Roberts to get DOT to double striping Hwy 129 all the way to Ocilla and redistricting. He and County Manager Frank Feild also spoke with Mike Worley of Georgia Power concerning meeting with him and DCA to update Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald construction and infrastructure about economic development. They also met with ACCG Marketing and Field Services Manager Ben Pittarelli and Government Relations Manager Dave Wills concerning the county's health insurance.

County Manager Frank Feild stated it was a good experience attending the conference and they are taking a hard look at adjusting the health insurance.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated that he sat in on several subcommittee meetings and most of the bills are in their infancy and some are in their first read stage. He stated he would like to mention some bills that he hadn't in the past since we had some people at the meeting that had some interest. House Bill 148 is the vicious dog act. He said that one of the reasons why the county is not addressing the bill at this time is because the State is addressing vicious dogs and is doesn't specify breed. Commissioner Downing said there is no reason to set ordinances that will probably be trumped by state law. He encouraged everyone to look up House Bill 148.

Commissioner Downing stated he spent a lot of time with the Representatives and several House leaders. The Speaker of the House mention in his address ACCG they are going to try and have a short session this year. Instead of introduces a lot of bills this year, they are going back over bills that were introduced last year to try and clean that up. Commissioner Downing stated they are on a fast track and many of the bills are moving.

He gave a list of bills that he thought the public would be interested in:

- House Bill 811-Refunding of State fund
- Senate Bill 39-Mental Health
- Senate Bill 75-Non-Partisan Election
- House Bill 31-Limit Assessments
- House Bill 56-Prohibit Tax Property Seizes

Commissioner Downing stated he met with all the Departments to inform them of the ACCG website. The website has Legislative tracking of the bills and shows what ACCG position is on the bills. The bills can be searched on the website by the subject or by the house bill number.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter added the following bills:

- House Bill 110-Forclosure Registries
- House Bill 397-Open Meetings and Open Records
- Senate Bill 321-Metal Theft
- House Bill 648-Indigents Defense Fees

Vice-Chairman Netter also stated the Commissioner Scott Downing was the moderator for Economic Development and he said the word is he did a good job.

Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Scott Downing mentioned as the Interim Economic Director, they have some projects they are working on to bring jobs to the community. He said they are about fifty or sixty jobs. Also, they have some prospects for the Millennium Technology Park that they are excited about. He mentioned if anyone had a question, please feel free to ask and he could present a full report if needed. He concluded they are going forward and working hard to bring jobs in.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter asked Chairman Jay III if they are looking at replacing the Economic Director.

Chairman Jay III stated they have put together a search committee and they are working on a job description. They are also looking at the different ways the position can be advertised.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated he sat in on the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Economic Development Authority meeting as a non-voting member. Their attitude for what they are trying to hire has changed from the manufactured side to different types of jobs. They are looking at hiring someone that is more oriented to what they want to do in the future. The Economic Development Authority needs to have strategic plan as to what we are going to do in the future and therefore tailor that job towards that. They have some decisions to make about what our future outlook needs to be and then decide.

Chairman Jay III stated that one of the assignments that have been discussed is to get County Manager Frank Field to help.

Vice-Chairman Netter asked what the range of the salary will be. Chairman Jay III stated it is negotiable.

Commissioner Kathy Davis stated she had done a research on wages from the surrounding counties for this position. She added the counties around us are paying \$50,000, \$53,000, \$56,000. Appling County is paying \$67,000 for this position but we must remember they have nuclear plant and has a lot more money in revenue coming in down there than we do. We are paying around \$87,000 and we are hunting money to try and help the county. We realize that there may not be an opportunity for revenue so the best thing to hope for is to make the cut. She suggested that they take a serious look at what the county is paying for that position. Commissioner Davis continue on by saying our Sheriff makes about \$20,000 less than that and look at the job responsibility he has being over the Sheriff Department and the Jail. He has to wear a badge, a gun, and his life on the line every day along with the deputies that work for us. She stated there have been times that this one man has made more in a couple of weeks than someone of our employees has made all year long. She said I hate to say it but this is a good place to look at cuts. We need to look at what we budgeted for and at what was spent because we need to cut there too. She said she feel like they can take \$40,000 or \$50,000 off that budget and still have that place running by being careful and considerate about whom we get to fill that position. Commissioner Davis continued with in her opinion, our county manager has more responsibility than this position running the entire

county but he is making a lot less than that. Seeing that they brought this position up and we are talking cuts, this is a good place to look.

Chairman Jay stated that he think that is accurate. Also, he has been conversating with County Manager Frank Field because he has expertise in this area. He hope as time goes on he could be more and more involved and that would hopefully reduce cost as well. Chairman Jay said he would like to see economic development become a part of his job. If we had someone that has the connections and the ability to produce an industry the dollars off the industry is what we have to have because our county is so small. The number is acres that people pay on property taxes is limited. The Chairman said that we are half the size of Irwin County. We have to have an industry in here to grow the revenue. This position is going to be key to recruiting that type of person. Chairman Jay said Commissioner Downing has reassured him that with two small children, he can't continue to be Interim Economic Director for free.

Meeting was adjourned.

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Lampkin, County Clerk