

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON MAY 7, 2013 AT 6:30 PM IN THE
BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Philip C. Jay III	Chairman
OD Netter	Vice-Chairman
Scott Downing	Commissioner
Daniel Cowan	Commissioner
Bennie Calloway	Commissioner
Frank Feild	County Manager
Toni Sawyer	County Attorney
Donna Prather	County Clerk

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

Reverend Terry Cole gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments To The Rules Of Order And,Or Changes To The Agenda Request

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

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to add Stop N Go alcohol/Janak Patel Application to the agenda. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Heir Property Video

County Manager Frank Feild presented a video on heir property. The video expressed how difficult it is to do anything with property that the owner did not have a will for stating who will inherit the property once they are deceased. The video had actual residents of Ben Hill County; Fitzgerald, GA that watched their relative property become dilapidated to point the home had to be torn down or unlivable because it is heir property. Applesseed is an organization that is now focusing this issue.

Public Comments:

Wendell Thompson stated addressed the Commissioners concerning traffic on the Bypass and Evergreen Road. He stated traffic has picked up tremendously and we need an under pass or over pass on the Bypass. He mentioned how long he has had to sit at the train track and that his wife was late for work constantly because of the train. He asked the Commissioners to start a traffic study for that area.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on April 8, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Public Hearing minutes held on April 9, 2013. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes held on April 9, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting minutes held on April 24, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Elected Officials and Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report

County Manager Frank Field stated the employee bonus has had a dramatic effect on employee morale. He thanked the Commissioners for making that difficult decision. He mentioned Meeks, Roberts, Ashley, Sumner, & Sirmans auditing firm has begun the 2012 audit and they will be in the office the next couple of weeks.

EMS week is May 19th thru 25th. Open house at EMS is on May 22nd from 10am to 2pm. They will give free blood pressure check and blood sugar test on May 23rd at the Senior Citizen Center during the monthly fish fry at 5:30 pm.

Planning Director Jason Miller has purchased a 1995 Ford F-150 pickup truck for the County Coroner. It will be equipped with a camper cap that was removed from the Forestry truck. This will give the Coroner a securable and easy to clean vehicle for transporting remains and eliminate EMS from having to transport remains in the ambulance.

The Maintenance Department has disassembled and sorted scrap from the air conditioning units removed from the jail. The scraps sold for \$3,000.00 and the funds will be used to help offset the cost of the Forestry truck.

Department of Community Affairs approved a grant extension on the Queensland Well thru September 30, 2013. We are partnering with the Water Well Trust in North Carolina to revise the grant concepts; which includes installing individual wells and elevated tank for non-portable fire water.

The Trauma Commission has decided not to offer the EMS Vehicle Grant and has reallocated the funds. The Commission had previously voted to restrict \$45,000.00 in SPLOST funds for a match. We will continue to collect EMS vehicle SPLOST funds and plan alternatives for acquiring new ambulances as part of the Capital Improvement Plan. EMS Director Mark Shealy and Jason Miller will attend the Director's meeting to find out what the Trauma Commission plans to do with the funds.

Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grants will not be offered in 2013. We had planned to address the flooding on Appomattox Road near the Health Department with these funds; but now we must find alternatives.

A plan is being developed to replace the Perry House Road Bridge over the Willacoochee Creek near Wiregrass Technical College. This was one of the projects in the 2012 Transportation SPLOST Referendum that was not approved by the voters.

Our health insurance program renews on July 1st. Last year, the claims exceeded the premiums we paid; therefore we expect a 15.03% increase in our premiums. We currently pay \$503.61 per employee; and this will go to \$579.30 per employee. The total increase is expected to be \$84,472. The Commission discussed this at the April 24th Budget Review and postponed a decision on a budget adjustment until the June Regular Meeting. In the interim, we are developing options for employee wellness programs that may help us reduce these costs. As health insurance costs continue to rise, every employee is going to have to get much more involved in wellness and help us manage the costs.

The National Fire Service Office contractor presented his fire inspection findings and recommendations at the May 1 Workshop. He stressed that the Insurance Services Office, which rates our fire protection status, has dramatically changed its rating system and the frequency of their inspections. ISO ratings affect the home insurance premiums our citizens pay, so we must immediately correct our shortcomings and prepare for a new inspection. This is a very high priority.

Most of the County has an ISO rating of 7/9; although there are areas that are more than 5-road miles from a certified fire station and are rated ISO-10. These areas pay the highest premiums; if they can get insurance at all. An example is the Bowens Mill community. The County is developing a comprehensive 5-Year Fire Plan. It will establish realistic goals, assign responsibilities, identify funding and put us on a path to upgrade the fire protection and reduce ISO ratings for all our citizens.

At the April 24th Special Called Meeting, the Commission voted to continue funding the fire services contract we have with the Ben Hill VFD. We are preparing a new contract with them that lays out what they must do, and what the County will do, to maintain and upgrade our fire protection and ISO rating.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application:

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve Stop N Go/Janak Patel alcohol application. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Old Business:

MUNICODE

Sales Representative Faye Creel of MUNICODE presented the Commissioners with a service proposal for a complete recodification of the County's Code of Ordinances.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the proposal that included a base cost of \$12,000.00 and the cost of the internet. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Paperless Project Award Presentation

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to postpone this agenda item. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with, Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

New Business:

Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Joint Animal Control Board & Appointments

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to create an Interim Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Joint Animal Control Board. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with, Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to appoint Frank Feild, Kathy Young, and Charlene Lankford as temporary Board Members for the Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Joint Animal Control Board. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

Road Paving Policy

County Manager Frank Feild presented a draft copy for road paving that he and Road Superintendent Tim Kegebein put together. He asked the Commissioners to review and consider the draft and get back with them at a later date.

Proposed Road Abandonments

County Manager Frank Feild presented a request to abandon Boxwood Road, Blackbird Road, Sandpiper Road, Chinaberry Road, and Nutcracker Road in the public interest; with easements reverting to the adjoining landowners.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to change July Regular Monthly Meeting date from July 2, 2013 to July 9, 2013, change the meeting time from 6:30 pm to 6:00 pm, and have a Public Hearing for the proposed road closing on July 9, 2013 at 5:30 pm. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Excess Property Resolution

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the resolution declaring County property as surplus and authorizing the disposal of a 1984 Chevrolet Truck from the Forestry Unit and a 2005 F-350 Pickup bed from the Forestry Unit. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing highlighted the following Bills that passed:

- HB 143 Changes and Eliminates Certain Filing Requirements for County Offices
- SB 160 Illegal Immigration Reform to Create Regulatory Efficiencies
- HB 242 Juvenile Justice Reform/Juvenile Code Rewrite
- HB 266 Changes to the New Process for Taxing Motor Vehicles
- HB 197 Changes to Forest Land Conservation Use Program
- HB 250 Energy Excise Tax Revision
- HB 463 Tax Commissioner Discretion on Used Vehicle Values and New Process for Taxing IRP Trucks

Commissioner Downing highlighted the Bills that didn't pass:

- HB 186 Revise Income Tax Credits for Business in Less Developed Areas
- SB 73 Removes T-SPLOST Match Penalty
- HB 370 State Income Tax; Elimination of Tier Classification
- HB 512 Guns-Allow in Courthouse and Government Buildings
- SB 4,5,6,7,8,9 Allow for Non-partisan Clerks of Superior Court, District Attorneys, Sheriff Races, County Commission Races, Tax Commissioner Races, and General Elections

Vice-Chairman OD Netter congratulated Commissioner Scott Downing for being the new Vice-Chairman on the Economic Development and Transportation Board. He stated the Commission Board had done a good job. He congratulated Commissioner Bennie Calloway for completing Commissioners certification and he also stated he has been re-elected to the NACO Board.

Commissioner's Remarks: NONE

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna Prather, County Clerk