

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON JUNE 4, 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.

Chaplain Robert Tate 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 Bank Signature Card 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

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve 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.

Public Comments:

Buddy Snowden ask the Commissioners who do he need to contact concerning children swimming in his pond and trespassing on his property. He stated he has called the Sheriff Department and the Game Warden; but each entity has said it is the other responsibility to take care of his issue.

The Commissioners recommended Mr. Snowden putting up private property signs and they also stated it is the Sheriff Department responsibility to take care of this issue.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on May 1, 2013. 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.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on May 6, 2013. 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 approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes held on May 7, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting minutes held on May 29, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Elected Officials and Department Head Reports:

Road Superintendent Tim Kegebein reported the West side of the County received two to five inches of rain. Some roads were closed and he asked the home owners to work with him. He also stated they have moved the trailer out to Magistrate Court.

Extension 4H Agent Geri Gelliland reported an Ag Agent has been hired for Ben Hill County. His name is Andy Shirley from Commerce, GA. He graduated from ABAC in Turf Management and graduated from The University of Georgia in Plan Pathology. He will begin work on July 1, 2013. He is currently looking for a place to live in Fitzgerald.

She also mentioned the State has provided 4H with an interim for two months. His name is Cameron Clark from Wilcox County. He is also a University of Georgia graduate.

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report

County Manager Frank Field reported the on-line sale of the old Forestry truck has brought \$1,398.00 that will offset the cost of the recent purchase we purchased for the Forestry Commission.

He reported we have also completed the retrofitting and upgrading the pickup that was purchased for the coroner and should be delivered to the coroner by the end of the week.

He also mentioned we are exploring the possibility of offering a pay incentive for employees who are proficient in Spanish, American Sign or other languages that are commonly used in Ben Hill County. This capability is very important for our first responders and those who deal with people who have limited verbal English language skills. Our program should

have a means of testing and certifying language proficiency and this should be incorporated in our policy manual. I will report back on our progress.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Old Business:

Multi-Purpose Recreational Facility

Department of Leisure Service Director Joe Parrish explained what the new recreation facility is and then he introduced Architect J. Glenn Gregory. He showed the master plans for the new facility that will potentially be located at Paulk Park.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to relax the rules on the public addressing the Chairman, Commissioners, and the J. Glen Gregory. 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.

At this time, the public asked questions concerning cost and the possibility of separating the office space building and pool.

2005 SPLOST Funds

County Manager Frank Field reported the 2005 SPLOST still had funds available for the Recreation, Ben Hill County Development Authority, and Flood. He provided a memo showing how much money each account has available.

After further discussion, Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion move the money out of 2005 Ben Hill County Development Authority and Flood account into a separate account. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Department of Leisure Service Director Joe Parrish was asked what projects he had not completed in the 2005 SPLOST. He stated the stage at Paulk Park, Compton Park, Ceramic Studio, Lion Park Concession Stand, Legion Park Building, and the Master Plans for phase I of the new facility.

Commissioner Scott Downing suggested the Board coming up with a list as to how the 2005 SPLOST Recreation funds will be spent.

After further discussion, Chairman Philip Jay asked County Manager Frank Feild and Department of Leisure Service Director Joe Parrish sit down and prepare a list of project that need to be completed and report back to the Commissioners.

Reeves/Walker and Brown Properties

County Manager Frank Field stated we have an unsolicited cash offer from the Development Authority of Ben Hill County to purchase the Reeves-Walker and Brown Properties for \$46,000. The County has a clear title on the Reeves-Walker property; while the Brown property has numerous liens and encumbrances.

The Development Authority intends to redevelop them. They would initially clean-up and create activity on these properties; which would enhance interest in and marketability of properties in the surrounding area. Eventually, the Development Authority plans to clear the title on the Brown property, make both properties available for sale and commercial use, and return them to the tax base. A draft redevelopment plan is posted on your I-Pads for review and comment.

New Business:

Municipal Election Agreement

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve Election Municipal Intergovernmental Agreement. 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.

ACCG Award

Commissioner Scott Downing presented the Georgia Trend Standard of Excellence Award for Office Efficiency presented by the Association County Commission Government won by Ben Hill County because of Project Paperless.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter congratulated Michael Santee and Donna Prather for their hard work on Project Paperless. He also thanked Michael for helping him with his presentation at the ACCG Conference held in Savannah. He stated other Governments are gearing toward being paperless and they answer a lot of questions during the presentation.

At-Grade Crossing on Benjamin Hill Drive

County Manager Frank Feild stated this idea is complex as it appears; but he said anytime you can eliminate an at-grade crossing, you need to do it for safety reasons. If the Commission wants to move forward on this, I recommend we ask DOT to do a feasibility study for us. They should look at all the at-grade crossings in Ben Hill County, and select candidates that would offer us the greatest benefits for the lowest cost. At the same time, we need to help the process by completing our Strategic Planning and sharing a clear vision of what we believe the community will look like in the next 15-20 years.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to recommend asking DOT to do a feasibility study possibly for the eastside of Ben Hill County for an over or under pass. 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.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion for the Chairman to send a letter to Wendell Thompson for suggesting an over or under pass. 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.

Health Insurance

County Manager Frank Field stated our Employee Health Insurance Contract is ready for renewal. The premiums will increase 15.03%; or a total of \$84,472 for the year beginning July 1st. We have 97 participants in the plan; and the monthly premiums are going from \$503.61 to \$579.30. The rate increase is due to our claims exceeding the premiums we paid. Being a part of the ACCG insurance pool has helped keep them from going even higher.

He stated the County has a wellness program that needs to be vigorously implemented. Every employee should be actively participating in activities that will keep them healthy; and we are going to do more to encourage this. This includes such things as health screenings, daily exercise, a healthy diet, taking their medications, and smoking cessation. We are also planning to include a variety of incentives. We are negotiating for a County gym membership that will allow our employees to participate at a minimal cost. We are also revisiting the idea of creating a health clinic for employees and family members that will be convenient and save them money. Ultimately, we know that our insurance premiums can only be controlled and reduced if we do more to keep ourselves healthy.

He said we are also talking to Third Party Administrators and exploring the option of Self-Funding our Health Insurance Program. Although our current loss ratio suggests we should stay in the ACCG pool, the health insurance environment is changing around us. The implementation of the Affordable Healthcare Act in January 2014 will have consequences none of us can predict, and could cause health insurance premiums and drug costs to go up dramatically. If we determine that a Self-Funded program is the best option for our employees and the County, we will be better prepared to move into it quickly.

He also mentioned running a strong wellness program will help our employees and reduce healthcare costs. Developing the option of Self-Funding will give us greater flexibility if we need it in the uncertain times ahead.

Mr. Feild recommendation to the Commissioners is to approve renewing our employee insurance policy with the ACCG pool.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve renewing the employee health insurance policy with Blue Cross Blue Shield. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Hospital Authority Nominations/Appointment

Vice-Chairman OD Netter nominated Mr. Connie Graham. Commissioner Scott Downing stated they would leave the nomination open.

Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Development Authority Member

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to close nominations. 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.

Ron Paulk is the new Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County Development Authority Board Member by acclamation.

Ocmulgee River Water Trail Partnership Appointments

The Ben Hill County Commission has been requested to appoint 2 primary and 2 alternate representatives. We believe this project has great potential. I recommend the Commission appoint Jason Miller and Tim Kegebein as Ben Hill County's primary and alternate representatives. I recommend the Commission also allow Fitzgerald to participate by appointing Alesia Biggers and Michael Jay as the City's primary and alternate representatives. These appointments should be for 1-year terms; and renewable each January 1st at the pleasure of the Commission.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to appoint Jason Miller and Tim Kegebein as Ben Hill County's primary and alternate representatives; Alesia Biggers and Michael Jay as the City's primary and alternate representatives to a 1-year term that will be renewed every January 1st. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Bank Signature Card

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to remove Kathy Davis name from the bank signature card and add Chairman Philip C. Jay III, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Frank Feild, and Donna R. Prather to the signature card. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing reported the General Assembly not in session. The ACCG Policy Committee meetings will begin in July and the information is posted on the ACCG website. He mentioned if any had any concerns to let him know so that he will pass the concern on. He encouraged the Commissioners to sign up for some of the meetings this summer. He stated these meetings are the best place to identify issues, debate options and form consensus on positions that ACCG should pursue at the local, state and federal levels.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter mention District Meeting will begin on the 17th in Thomasville and the next meeting will be held in Warner Robins.

Commissioner's Remarks:

Chairman Philip Jay thanked Alan Conger for all the years of serving on the Fitzgerald Ben Hill County Development Authority.

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk