

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON JULY 9, 2013 AT 6:00 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.

Pastor Bennie Calloway gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

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

Approval of the Agenda

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

Public Comments: NONE

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on June 3, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes held on June 4, 2013. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting minutes held on June 26, 2013. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Elected Officials and Department Head Reports:

Extension 4H Agent Geri Gelliland introduced Ben Hill County new Ag Agent Andy Shirley. He stated he is a recent graduate from The University of Georgia and he is glad to be here to serve this community.

Chief Appraiser Joyce Merritt reported that Ben Hill County has an estimated \$5,000,000.00 growth in the digest. She said exemptions grew considerably due to the new covenants and homestead exceptions from \$58,252,178.00 to \$84,815,512.00. This is an increase of \$26,563,334.00. She also stated the millage rollback rate is 14.740 and the 2012 millage is 14.785. The rollback rate is calculated off of the reassessments. She mentioned the consolidation sheets have been turned over to Ben Hill County Board of Education.

County Manager Frank Feild stated he will need to publish the five (5) year history in the newspaper next Wednesday and he also recommended a Called Meeting July 31, 2013.

Commissioner Scott Downing joined the meeting.

Road Superintendent Tim Kegebein reported they are starting on the LMIG Resurfacing Project. The entire project is 3.85 miles that will include the following; Platte Road, Sherrett Drive, Stephens Road, Meadow Lane, Jeff Davis Road, Wendy Lane, Cherokee Court. This project will be funded with LMIG and SPLOST funds.

EMS Director Mark Shealey stated EMS Department has experienced a significant increase in call volume in 2013 that consist of 911 responses and out of town transport. Mr. Shealey requested staffing a day truck. He stated the cost of this change would be \$29,762.00 for 2013; but because of the increase of calls, a 40% return will cover up to \$28,500.00 of this increase.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve staffing the day truck at the EMS Department. 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.

EMA Director Jason Miller reported he purchased some shelves from the Center for Disease Control that normally cost \$100,000.00 for \$10,000.00 for Probate Court, Magistrate Court, and the Public Defender Office. He said the shelves are up at Probate Court and Magistrate Court.

Mr. Miller reported EMA has been approved for 195,000.00 grant from GEMA to purchase ten (10) electronic message board, two (2) trailers, laptop, and a dully truck. He said he needs the Commission to approve the grant and approve the Chairman to sign all documents.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the grant from GEMA and to approve the Chairman so sign all documents. 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.

Probate Judge David Hobby thanked the Commissioners, Frank Feild, Jason Miller, Jack Smith, and Thomas Padgett for the shelves and the installation of the shelves. He stated he is excited about having the shelves and they will last for many years to come.

Chamber of Commerce Director Christi Schirack introduced the new Economic Director Ashley Morris. Ms. Morris stated she is excited about being here to work and looking forward to meeting everyone she has not met yet. She invited the Commissioners to come by the Chamber and talk with her when they get a chance.

Mrs. Schirack thanked the Commissioners for their continuous support. She stated The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce has been working diligently to promote the business climate in Fitzgerald-Ben Hill. Programs that have incorporated to support Economic Development and Community Development programs involving Ben Hill County are Economic Development forums, and established and continued to carry out Manufacturing Luncheons and Women's Business Networking. She also stated they are working closely with the Economic Development Director, both Scott Downing and recently-hired Ashley Morris, to carry out plans for Business Attraction and Recruitment.

In community development, she reported they helped arranged a meeting with Bruce Green of the GA Department of Economic Development to explore ideas of how to attract cultural and heritage tourists to Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County and how to have our town set up to be easily navigable when they arrive. In other community events, she stated we helped arrange and carry out the Community Pride Day, the Career Expo Day that was held at Wiregrass along with Labor Finders.

In Business Retention and Expansion, she reported they have been visiting and learning about companies' strengths and challenges. She stated they will be doing many more visits in the upcoming weeks. She reported their retail committee has implemented the Colony Cash program to help the local economy and they have arranged several small business seminars including Safety Smarts for businesses.

In the area of Entrepreneurial and Small Business Start-Up, she reported they have a small business resource center in their front office. It has all the resources necessary to give people information when they are looking to start up a small business.

Mrs. Schirack stated they are working on in the upcoming year is becoming a GA Certified Chamber. Being a certified Chamber will lend more credibility to what we are doing in our community. It will also draw more notice on the state level that we are a community that is business friendly.

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report

County Manager Frank Field reported implementation of the Affordable Care Act will affect Ben Hill County because we have over 50 employees; however, there is still a lot of confusion about how it will affect us and what our options are going forward. He said we are continuing to study how the law is unfolding and will bring options and/or

Mr. Field reported DOT has approved the County's request for \$ 116,753 for pavement markings, roadway striping, raised pavement markers and stop bars. There is no match required for this grant. The County will be responsible for bidding, contracting, and supervision. We hope to get the notice to proceed later this month.

Annexation Request:

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the annexation request for Michael Griffin at 159 Meadowlark Lane to include Meadow Lark Boulevard to be annexed into the City of Fitzgerald. 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.

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Old Business:

Hospital Authority Board Vacancies

Commissioner Scott Downing nominated Will Hammond and Commissioner Daniel Cowan nominated Barry Peavy. Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Calloway were all in favor of the nominations.

Energy Excise Tax

County Manager Frank Field reported he is still waiting on documents from the City and there is no action at this point.

Road Closing

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion keep Boxwood Road open. 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.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to close Blackbird Road, Sandpiper Road, Chinaberry Road, and Nutcracker Road. 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.

New Business:

Sheriff Grant Application

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant application for \$9,000.00. 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.

2012 Audit

County Manager Frank Field reported the audit is completed and attached to the I-pads. He stated a copy would be posted to the County and Department of Community Affairs website once it was accepted by the Commissioners.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion accept the 2012 audit, submit it to the Department of Audits and Accounts, and post it on the County website. 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.

2005 Resolution

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to postpone this agenda item.

Queensland CDBG Water Project

County Manager Frank Field reported we will have to submit a request for Grant Revision and schedule a Public Hearing since the project has changed substantially. The community survey was done in February 2010 and time that has elapsed. Sara Davis suggests we may need to do another community survey. He stated the drafts documents are attached to your I-Pads have been coordinated with DCA and the Water Well Trust; but the grant revision paperwork must be finalized and a public hearing conducted before this is ready for resubmission.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Master Loan Agreement, Developer Agreement, and Policies & Procedures documents. 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.

Perry House Road Bridge

County Manager Frank Field reported the Perry House Road highway bridge over Willacoochee Creek near Wiregrass Technical College needs to be replaced. The most recent DOT inspection of this bridge was on January 15, 2013. It reiterates the same findings of previous DOT inspections dating back to 2004; and possibly much earlier. After further discussion, the Commission decided to postpone this agenda item until the next Special Called meeting.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing reported the ACCG Policy Council meeting and District meetings are coming up. He mentioned if anyone had time, they would be good to attend.

Commissioner's Remarks:

Commissioner Scott Downing reported he will be meeting with Senator Tyler Harper and if any of the Commissioners would like to attend, let him know.

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk