

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 3, 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.

Elder Gene Thomas 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. Commissioner Bennie Calloway opposed 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 Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Public Comments:

Kathy Davis expressed her support for the Volunteer Fire Department. She commended them on their job performance by stating they go way beyond the call of duty without pay and they risk their lives fighting fires.

Linda Collins of Evergreen Way stated she has holes on both sides of her driveway that was installed improperly installed by the Road Department years ago. The drive way is holding water and not draining properly. She provided pictures to show the problems she is having. She also expressed her concerns about her neighbor not taking care of their property.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Daniel Calloway made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting minutes held on August 05, 2013. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chairman OD Netter all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting minutes held on August 06, 2013. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, 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 August 09, 2013. 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.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting minutes held on August 19, 2013. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting minutes held on August 28, 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.

Constitutional Officer:

Chief Magistrate Romelle Green thanked the Commissioners and EMA Director Jason Miller for his new filing system.

Elected Officials and Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report

County Manager Frank Feild reported the Road Department used over \$100,000 in SPLOST money last year to open up the drainage ditches feeding Turkey Creek. Many of these ditches had not been cleaned in about 5-years, and were choked with weeds and trees. This work made a dramatic difference in drainage throughout the whole community and we appreciate everything Tim Kegebein and the Road Department did.

Mr. Feild thanked the owners along the sides of these ditches for letting us use their property to move our heavy equipment and get the job done. He stated there is still a lot more work to do, but we believe the problem is now manageable.

Mr. Feild reported the Road Department has completed 4.03 miles of road resurfacing on. He said we spent a total of \$401,000 on this project by using \$267,000 of DOT's LMIG money and \$134,000 of SPLOST money. This came out to be about \$99,585 a mile. The resurfacing included Platte Road, Sherrett Drive, Stephens Road, Meadow Lane, Jeff Davis Highway, Wendy Lane, and Cherokee Court. The Road Superintendent was able to squeeze

some extra work out of the project by resurfacing Hampton Court, Harper Court, Bird Song, and the end of Wenoa Way.

Mr. Feild reported we applied for the 2014 LMIG money and received \$287,743. He stated they are working with Ricketson Construction Company. This allows us to do more road resurfacing a year earlier than scheduled at a much cheaper price and this will keep many of our roads from deteriorating further with the heavy rains. We will use of DOT's 2014 LMIG money and \$150,000 of our SPLOST money for this \$437,743 project. He stated 5.12 miles will be resurfaced at a cost of \$85,497 per mile compared to the \$99,585 per mile. Mr. Feild reported we did a bid opening on Friday for restriping using a separate DOT grant for \$116,753 and the two apparent low bidders came in under budget. We plan to do this work in coordination with the resurfacing.

Mr. Feild reported on August 19th, EMA Director Jason Miller hauled our worse ambulance to the American Emergency Vehicles factory in North Carolina to be remounted. This process will put a new chassis under the old box for \$85,000. This will be paid for with SPLOST funds. By remounting, it extends the life of our EMS equipment, brings it up to the same standards as a brand-new ambulance, and it saves the County about \$50,000.

Mr. Feild stated SPLOST money is very important to improving the quality of life in our community. It helps us focus on the things that are needed most and insures we will have the money to make them happen. The flood control, road resurfacing, and ambulance remounting are examples of what we are able to do with good leadership and a little SPLOST money.

Mr. Field reported he met with DOT and CSX Railroad officials at the Anderson Memorial Church Road and CSX Rail Crossing on Wednesday to discuss upgrading safety. There are no lights or guards at this crossing and it has claimed 3 lives in the last 2 years. We agreed that a guarded signalized intersection is needed there. DOT has agreed to provide us design specifications to raise the road surface. This will eliminate trucks dragging bottom as they cross the tracks. The County will then resurface the approaches from cross bar to cross bar at an estimated cost of about \$20,000. At the same time, DOT will allocate \$250,000 to the Railroad to install and maintain lights and gates. This process normally takes 18-24 months, but we believe it could be completed in 12-18 months.

Ben Hill County was one of 49 counties in Georgia that qualified for a 2013 ACCG Health Promotion & Wellness Grant. The grant is for \$1,000. We were selected based on our application and commitment to employee wellness. Ben Hill County has received this grant multiple times thanks to the efforts of County Clerk Donna Prather and HR Manager Joann Richardson. Other counties are now looking at us as the model. We are planning an Employee Appreciation Day and Health Fair for Friday, October 4th at the Senior Center from 9-12.

A calendar of key dates is being prepared for posting on your I-Pads. It will include Commission decisions and suspense actions such as annual filings and contract renewals.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve EMS spending \$85,000.00 of SPLOST funds to replace the chassis on the ambulance. 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.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application:

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve William Leonard alcohol application. 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.

Old Business:

Volunteer Fire Department Documents

The Commissioners discussed the documents received from the Volunteer Fire Department CEO Alan Conger in response to a letter sent to the Volunteer Fire Department from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated he would like to resolve the issue of ownership of what equipment belongs to the Volunteer Fire Department and what equipment belongs to Ben Hill County.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to accept documents received from the Volunteer Fire Department as satisfactory in response to the questions requested by the Commissioners. 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 to allow County Attorney Toni Sawyer to review the Volunteer Fire Department contract. 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.

Inmate Medical Saving Program

Sheriff McLemore stated House Bill 197 created an opportunity for Georgia counties to achieve additional savings on inmate health care bills. The inmate medical care program limits the amount that hospitals can charge for emergency care and follow-up care. He stated a contract is not needed for the program; but a contract is needed for administrative services through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia. He added this is not an insurance plan.

Sheriff McLemore provided a worksheet from the current provider Transform Health CS. It showed the current savings. He suggested submitting a bill to Transform Health and ACCG Inmate Medical Savings Program to see who will get the better deal.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to authorize Sheriff Bobby McLemore to sign up for the ACCG Inmate Medical Savings Program. 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 authorize the Chairman to sign all documents for the ACCG Inmate Medical Savings Program. 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.

Perry House Road Bridge

County Manager Frank Field stated the Perry House Road highway bridge over the Willacoochee Creek near Wiregrass needs to be replaced. He said 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.

It states: "This structure requires posting due to insufficient shear capacity of the concrete superstructure. A replacement structure is required to upgrade this structure to a point where posting is no longer required. The following maintenance recommendations are provided to maintain this structure at the current rating. The deck joints throughout the structure have failed and should be cleaned and sealed. Brush and other vegetation growing around the structure should be cut and removed."

Mr. Field said Watkins Construction, acting in a pro-bono capacity on behalf of Ben Hill County, has solicited bids from TTL and Geotechnical & Environmental Consultants to conduct borings and core-samplings. TTL submitted a bid on June 23, 2013 to conduct 4 borings for \$14,100. Geotechnical & Environmental Consultants submitted a bid on June 21, 2013 to conduct 7 borings for \$12,500. Watkins Construction reports both firms have good reputations and believes the bids are comparable. Ben Hill County will provide traffic control, site support and patch the bridge coring locations after completion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve Geotechnical & Environmental Consultants to conduct borings and core-samplings on the Perry House Road highway bridge. 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.

New Business:

2013 Legislative Leadership Conference Voting Delegate

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve Commissioner Daniel Cowan as the 2013 Legislative Leadership Conference voting delegate. 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.

Certificates of Excellence

The Ben Hill County Commission recognized sixteen County Departments and Constitutional Offices for Excellence in Financial Management during calendar year 2012.

- Donna Lampkin, County Clerk, for the General Government
- Cindi Dunlap, Elections
- Linda McDonald, Tax Commissioner
- Joyce Merritt, Tax Assessor
- Jason Miller, EMA Director, for General Government Buildings, Animal Control, Planning, Zoning, and Building Inspection

- Betty Lynn Johnson, Clerk of Court
- Denise Fachini, District Attorney
- Timothy Eidson, Public Defender
- Judge Romelle Greene, Magistrate Court
- Sheriff Bobby McLemore, Sheriff's Department and E911
- Tim Kegebein, Road Department and Solid Waste Department
- Cathy Posey, Senior Assistance

American Legion Proclamation

Chairman Philip Jay stated he was contacted by Jimmy Clark about setting aside a day in honor of American Legion Post all around the world. He stated he is in support of this and wants to sign a proclamation with Mayor Mark Massee.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Chairman to sign a resolution with Mayor Mark Massee in honor of American Legion Post day. 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.

Deed Well & Property to Mobley Bluff Community

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to deed well and property to the Mobley Bluff Community. 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.

Relocating Elections Department

County Manager Frank Feild suggested moving the Board of Elections to the DLS Ceramic Studio at 115 W. Pine Street because of privacy issues, doors being locked during elections, and other problems.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Board of Elections moving into the DLS Ceramic Studio at 115 W. Pine Street. 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.

Land Bank

County Manager Frank Field gave a power point overview on land bank and the positive influence it has. He stated the special purpose of the land bank is to return stranded properties back to the tax roll.

Appointment to MHDDAD Regional Planning Board

Vice-Chairman OD Netter nominated Steve O'Neal.

Appointment to Community Service Board

Vice-Chairman OD Netter nominated Connie Graham.

Appointment to South Georgia Regional Commission

Commissioners postponed this agenda item.

Appointment to Hospital Authority Board

Commissioner Scott Downing nominated Will Hammond.

Amendments to the Ben Hill County Personnel Policy Manual

County Manager Frank Field submitted some changes to the Personnel Policy Manual. He stated he will give a copy a copy to the Department Heads as well so they could review the documents.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated since we are looking at changes in the handbook, he would like for them to revisit the accrual rates for annual and sick leave. Vice-Chairman OD Netter stated he wanted to revisit the difference between an Administrator and a Manager. He added the language needs to spell out so when the board looks at it they will know what the difference is.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter introduced the new Coordinator for the Development Authority, Courtney Whitman.

Executive Session

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to enter into Executive Session for Personnel. 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.

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

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to accept the minutes from Executive Session. 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.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing stated the Policy Council met last week in Macon, GA to approve the platform to go before ACCG. He mentioned there is a lot of work to be done; but most of it hasn't changed much. ACCG has decided to go to a two year platform and this is the middle of the two years, so most of this is clean-up work.

Commissioner Downing stated he has spoken with Senator Harper and Representative Robert about the Commission meeting with them and the best time for them is at the end of the month. He stated he will be coordinating the meeting with them and then get with the Commission to see when they can meet.

Commissioner's Remarks:

Commissioner Scott Downing stated he wish Kathy Davis would have stayed at the meeting because he believe there are some miss information in the public about the fire audit. He stated for some reason the public thinks were are auditing the Volunteer Fire Department; but that is not true, we auditing the entire County to see what can been done about the rates. He said he thinks the Commission needs to do some educating so the public will know what their intentions are.

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk