

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON FEBRUARY 5, 2014 AT 7:00 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
Frank Feild	County Manager
Donna Prather	County Clerk
Toni Sawyer	County Attorney

Commissioner Bennie Calloway was absent.

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

Judge Romelle Green gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments To The Rules Of Order

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.

Approval of the Agenda/Agenda Changes

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, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Public Comments:

Wendell Thompson addressed the Commissioners concerning City and County Consolidation. He stated he had vandalism on his property located on Frank Road and the Bi-pass. He asked the Commissioners to do a study concerning consolidation.

Allen Conger stated he was there to give the Commission an update as to what the Volunteer Fire Department was doing. He stated they are gradually picking up some of the things that are on the list they are short on. He stated he wants to put in the newspaper soon the cost putting a dry hydrate on citizen's property and the decrease of the cost of the insurance by having a dry hydrate in the five mile area. He asked if the Road Department could provide a back hoe and the driver to install the dry hydrates on the citizens that wants one. He also stated they want to start making address signs for citizens in the County.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes held on January 06, 2014. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes held on January 07, 2014. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Public Hearing Minutes held on January 30, 2014 that included changes to the minutes. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting Minutes held on January 30, 2014. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Department Head Reports:

Board of Election's Supervisor Cindi Dunlap reported they appeared before the State Election Board for eight accusations. She stated they received two letters of instruction. All but one of the accusations was dismissed. Mrs. Dunlap stated she and the County Attorney have already begun to talk to address areas that need to be improved during the elections process.

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report:

County Manager Frank Feild reported the document signing for the BB&T lease-purchase note on the ambulance and the Sheriff's patrol vehicles were completed January 30th. We picked it up in North Carolina at the factory yesterday and it was driven to the EMS. The radio is being installed today and it should be ready for service by the end of the week.

Commissioner OD Netter, Courtney Whitman and I met with USDA last week to discuss a loan-grant program to help us buy patrol vehicles. There are a number of applications already stacked up awaiting funds; so we will prepare ours and add it to the queue.

He said the Staff Version of the 2013 Year in Review will be posted on the website next week.

Mr. Feild stated the Communications study began with a site visit on January 21st and 22nd. The contractor met with our Emergency Communications System users, listened to their needs, documented the existing system, and identified a number of problem areas. We expect a presentation of the findings and recommendations to be made to the Commission in mid-February; with the final report by the end of the month.

Mr. Field reported Municode will be here tomorrow from 9-3 to discuss recodification of the County Ordinances. We have invited the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Sheriff, the Probate Judge, the Chief Magistrate and Deputy, the County Clerk, and the City and County Code Enforcement Officers. Our objective is to have updated, user-friendly codes that will be enforced.

Mr. Field also announced the new Elections Office will have a ribbon-cutting and open house from 11-2. Light refreshments will be served.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Old Business:

2013 Budget Adjustments & Close-Out

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve a \$417.96 budget adjustment for the Clerk of Superior Court and credit Debt Services in the same amount. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to rescind the motion to approve a \$3,000 budget adjustment for the Clerk of Superior Court. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve a \$3,787.97 budget amendment for Election's travel and credit Debt Services for \$3,787.97. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to close out the 2013 Budget. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to instruct the Sheriff to send all E911 surcharge checks to the Commission Office unopened. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to send a letter to the Telecommunication Companies requesting them to send the E911 surcharge checks directly to the Commissioner's office. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to close out the 2013 Budget. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

New Business:

Official County Website (Facebook, Twitter Policy)

County Manager Frank Feild reported Facebook and Twitter have been added to the Official County Website. We went from 27,000 individual user visits in December to over 50,000 in January. This highlights the need to establish clear policies on the purpose of our website, how it is to be managed, what content may be posted, and what protocols and safeguards should be in place.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to give Administrative Specialist Michael Santee the task of researching best practices, drafting policies, and presenting them for approval. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Hospital Authority Board Appointment

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to postpone this agenda item until an official resignation is received. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing and Vice-Chairman OD Netter both voting for the motion. Commissioner Daniel Cowan abstained from the vote.

After further discussion, Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to accept nominations for the vacancy. Vice-Chairman OD Netter seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing nominated Eric Stone. Commissioner Daniel Cowan nominated Dr. Stephen Thombly.

State of the County

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to forgo reading the State of the County and allow it to be entered into the official organ of Ben Hill County. 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.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing stated he picked up the 100 year flag from ACCG. He also said there are several bills on the floor and advised anyone to get with him if they are interested in the bills.

Commissioner's Remarks: NONE

Executive Session

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation and a Personnel Issue. 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 Scott Downing made a motion to end Executive Session. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing and Commissioner Daniel Cowan both voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing and Commissioner Daniel Cowan both voting for the motion.

EMS Director Mark Shealy addressed an incident that occurred on February 2, 2014 involving the Volunteer Fire Department. He explained EMS received a call to Glenn Merritt Road to a motor vehicle crash with confirmed entrapment. While enroute, his crew were advised the patient was extremely entrapped and the Volunteer Fire Department was requested to respond for assistance if needed. During the extrication, the Volunteer Fire Department CEO began to hinder and argue with EMS personnel; therefore making it difficult for them to perform their duties. Mark explained how this is an ongoing problem that happens every time the CEO is on the scene and has become harassment. He stated EMS works well with the other members of the Volunteer Fire Department and their assistance was invaluable on this scene. Mark added the harassment and hindering of their job duties has come to the point that it is unacceptable and he is asking for direction from the County Commission to resolve this issue.

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk