

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON APRIL 8, 2014 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
Donna Prather	County Clerk
Toni Sawyer	County Attorney

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

County Manager Frank Feild announced this meeting was posted 24-hours in advance in compliance with Georgia Law. All Commissioners were telephonically notified. An announcement and agenda were posted on the Commissioners I-Pads, distributed by e-mail, posted on the county website, and posted on the door to the Commissioner's Meeting Room. The Herald-Leader was notified by E-mail.

Reverend Dewain Joiner 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 Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan 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, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Public Comments:

Rhonda Hopkins, from the Division for Aging Adult Protection Agency, asked the Commissioners where do they stand on proving public transportation for the elderly and disable.

Reverend Herbert Jones, from 1st Community Faith in Action, expressed his concerns for summer jobs for the youth in the community. He stated the other agencies had agreed to help fund the summer project. He is asking Ben Hill County to sponsor some jobs as well.

Captain Jacob Longoria stated he was there express his concerns regarding E911. He stated he thinks the Sheriff is doing a great job and think it would be a mistake to take it away from the Sheriff.

Volunteer Fire Department CEO Allen Conger stated they are prepared to deliver the new address signs be he is unsure as to whether there is an ordinance that prohibits them from doing so. He asked the Commissioners to put the ordinance situation to rest so they can put the signs out.

Mr. Conger also stated that E911 has gotten a lot better. He stated he like the way it works with the Volunteer Fire Department and would hate to see it change.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes held on March 3, 2014. 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.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes held on March 4, 2014. 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 approve the Special Called Meeting Minutes held on March 26, 2014. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer:

Sheriff Bobby McLemore reported the radios are in and approximately 75% installed. He also stated the truck and two vehicles are in and on the road.

Commissioner Scott Downing asked Sheriff McLemore where we stand on our ordinances. Sheriff McLemore replied the Magistrate Judge only enforce two ordinances; those are disorderly conduct and marijuana less than an ounce.

Department Head Reports:

County 4-H Agent Geri Gelliland reported they just finished the Ag Production Meeting and they had over 400 to attend all the meetings. She stated Andy has left and the paperwork is channeling through UGA to fill the position. Phillip Edward, from Irwin County, is working one day a week in Ben Hill County to assist them until the vacancy is filled. Mrs. Gelliland stated six applicants have been interviewed for the secretary position.

Mrs. Gelliland stated five 4-H'ers attended Ag Day activities at the Capitol and the Freight Depot, they have completed Leadership Week, Project Achievement will be held in Houston County, and the Poultry Judging Team has begun practicing.

Executive Director for the Development Authority of Ben Hill County Courtney Whitman gave a brief update of her recent activities. She stated the Development Authority of Ben Hill County is taking a more holistic approach to Economic Development, through partnerships with USDA Strike-Force, Development Authority of Ben Hill County, Ben Hill

County Revolving Loan Fund, Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Land Bank, Ga Appleseed Heirs Property Project, SBA, SBDC, UGA Agricultural Extension Service, and Wiregrass Technical College. Ms. Whitman stated their goal is to truly serve the needs and implement reliable solutions that will benefit the entire Ben Hill County Community.

Road Superintendent Tim Kegebein reported due to the weather conditions, the roads are messy and wet. Heron Road is still closed. He stated the LMIG new numbers were in and County Manager Frank Field will elaborate more in the Manager's report.

County Board Reports: NONE

County Manager's Report:

County Manager Frank Feild reported the following:

Vehicles

We have completed the paperwork and received a check from BB&T for the Ambulance. This has been put back into the SPLOST account.

The paperwork on the Sheriff's 2 patrol vehicles and truck has also been submitted. We expect to receive payment this week; which will allow us to pay the dealer. There is another patrol car at the dealership that the Sheriff ordered. As soon as we can verify there are adequate funds in the Sheriff's Vehicles SPLOST account, we will recommend the Commission approve this as a cash purchase.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to purchase the Sheriff vehicle as cash purchase using SPLOST funds. 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.

EMS

The EMS responded to 1126 calls in the first quarter and has collected nearly a quarter of a million dollars (\$222,135) in revenues. This puts them on track with last year's figures.

Roads

DOT has approved our centerline road mileage data for 2013. This is what DOT uses this to calculate what funds we'll receive for road maintenance under the LMIG program. Tim Kegebein and the Road Department are currently maintaining 361 miles of public roads for our citizens and visitors; 171 miles are paved roads, and 190 miles are unpaved. This is County maintenance, it does not include the US and State highways that runs through the County.

Departmental Review/Staffing Study

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government has sent us a survey to be filled out by all the Constitutional Offices and Departments. After they review the surveys, they will schedule a team visit and spend a day or two on-site; meeting with and visiting the Constitutional Offices and Departments.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Old Business:

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan Resolution

We recommend the Commission approve the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, along with the staff-recommended changes, by adopting the attached Resolution.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan Resolution along with the recommended changes from the Public Hearing. 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 amend the motion to reflect the eight critical facilities for Ben Hill County and 21 for the City of Fitzgerald. 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.

Communication Study

County Manager Frank Feild reported the Communications Study has identified a number of technical problems in our equipment and we are working to correct them.

We have developed a plan to erect a 300' tower on the County-owned land next to the Joshlyn Road Solid Waste Collection Site. We believe this will provide reliable communications anywhere in the County, is the most logical, and cost-effective solution for us. This will be done as a public-private partnership; and a formal agreement is being prepared.

The tower will host two new County Antennas. They will provide dedicated receive and transmit frequency sets for the Sheriff, EMS, EMA, and the Road Department with two spare sets.

In preparation, the County has done soil sampling. The County Surveyor has marked the location for the tower and the FAA has verified it will not interfere with the airport approach. The site has been partially cleared to allow placement of the guy wires and anchors. An inter-modulation study is being done to insure there will not be interference with our neighbors' communications and an FCC permit is being requested. We have also designed and developed cost estimates for a climate-controlled utility building, security fencing, monitoring, a grounding system, and a self-start emergency generator with automatic switching.

Mr. Feild said we believe establishing our own Land Bank will be less costly than contracting to have this work done. It allows us more control, and it puts us in a position where other counties and cities can contract for our services in the future. He mentioned this is a First Reading of the Draft Intergovernmental Agreement. It will be put on the agenda for the next City Council Meeting and we plan to make a series of presentations to interested community organizations and the School Board.

Queensland Projects

We drilled a well at the solid waste collection site, cleared the parcel next to it, opened a new drive, installed security fencing, and built a shed with a concrete floor to house the 5,000 gallon tanker. The plumbing and electricity are being connected to provide pumper trucks and brush trucks 24/7 access to refill with fire water.

Two churches, seven rentals and the solid waste collection site have now been disconnected from the Queensland community water system and are being served by three wells. This leaves 14 occupied properties on the system. We have been meeting with Queensland community leaders to discuss the county getting out of the water business and insuring the Queensland residents have reliable and portable water.

The Water Well Trust has not received any applications from Queensland residents for financial assistance in drilling individual wells. You may recall that the Water Well Trust has collected about \$90,000 to help us; and I believe they will use this money somewhere else if our citizens don't apply.

We recommend the Commission approve sending a letter to each Queensland resident telling them that the County is terminating its involvement in the community water system; and suggesting they either submit an application to the Water Well Trust before May 15th or be prepared to accept responsibility for providing their own water. A Draft letter is attached for approval and authorizing the Chairman to sign.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve sending a letter to each Queensland resident telling them that the County is terminating its involvement in the community water system; and suggesting they either submit an application to the Water Well Trust before May 15, 2014 or be prepared to accept responsibility for providing their own water. 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.

New Business:

DLS Board Appointment

Bobby Chasteen's 4-year term on the DLS Board has expired. He is willing to serve another term if re-appointed. The DLS Board and Director recommend the Commission approve his re-appointment.

Commissioner Daniel Cowan nominated Judge Bobby Chasteen to the DLS Board.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion nomination be closed. 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.

Armory Request

County Manager Frank Field stated there has been a great deal of discussion about the Armory and its potential use as a gym and DLS offices. This could mean a significant savings on constructing a new building at Paulk Park. We recommend the Commission formally request an informal meeting with representatives of the School Board, City, and DLS to discuss possible options for future use of the Armory before any final actions are taken. A Draft letter is attached for approval and authorizing the Chairman to sign.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the draft letter and authorize the Chairman to sign it. 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.

E911

County Manager Frank Field stated ACCG has recommended we consider contracting with other counties to provide them 911 dispatch services. This would be a source of additional revenue for the county. The Sheriff has opposed this.

We are also concerned about discrepancies in the county's property numbering system and believe this is not getting the attention it needs from the 911 staff.

Finally, we see 911 staff members performing duties that are outside those normally expected of dispatchers.

All of these concerns are based on improving the efficiency of our operations, using our resources wisely, and taking advantage of opportunities to increase revenues.

Commissioner Scott Downing stated they need to look at doing something different with E911 because the funds that we are receiving now for E911 will not be able to sustain it in the future. He stated we need to look at doing something different with E911 funding or outsourcing.

Sheriff Bobby McLemore stated he was not opposing bringing in another county in with Ben Hill County; but he did oppose Wilcox County because their radios don't work there. He stated he took over E911 because it was shambles and not for the pay.

Federal Building

The Federal Building needs to be empty; so it can undergo a major clean-up, repairs, and renovation. The HVAC system has failed and needs to be replaced. Although there are funds in the 2011 SPLOST to do some of the required work, it will be expensive, and the building should not be occupied until this work is completed.

The Department of Juvenile Justice moved out of the Federal Building and into new offices on Pine Street at the end of March. The Joint Task Force is also preparing to move to new offices.

The remaining tenant is Right From the Start Medicaid. While we appreciate all they do for our community; we are not in a position to continue providing them office space and are encouraging them to find a better location. We are working with the City staff on possible options.

We have been searching for grants that might help us renovate the Federal Building for adaptive reuse as a museum. It might be possible to use our dedicated SPLOST funds as leverage for a larger grant; allowing us to do the majority of the work that is needed using other people's money.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons:

Commissioner Bennie Calloway expressed his concerns on paving Mt. Calvary Dorminy Mills Church Road. He stated Road Superintendent Tim Kegebein had agreed to pave the road in the pass but fell to do so. Vice-Chairman OD Netter stated the Commission has already voted to pave that road.

After further discussion, Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to pave Mt. Calvary Dorminy Mills Church Road as is. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Bennie Calloway both voting

for the motion and Commissioner Scott Downing and Commissioner Daniel Cowan opposed the vote motion. Chairman Philip Jay broke the tie by voting for the motion.

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing stated the session ended March 20th. He named bills that passed or did not pass that were of subsequent to the county. He referred everyone to the ACCG website and click on Legislative Tracking to view the list of bills.

Commissioner's Remarks: NONE

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk