

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 2, 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
Bennie Calloway	Commissioner
Daniel Cowan	Commissioner
Frank Feild	County Manager
Donna Prather	County Clerk

Chairman Philip C. Jay III called the meeting to order.

Reverend Lloyd Stenbridge 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, Vice-Chairman OD Netter, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

**Approval of the Agenda/Agenda Changes**

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the agenda. 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.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to add Employee Health Insurance to the agenda under new business. 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: NONE**

**Acceptance of Prior Minutes**

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting held on August 4, 2014. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting held on August 5, 2014. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting held on August 27, 2014. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Scott Downing all voting for the motion.

### **Presentations**

#### **Vanessa Melton/Hospital Update**

Hospital Authority Board Chairman Vanessa Melton introduced Kurt Olsen of the new Management Company that has taken over Dorminy Medical Center. Mr. Olsen stated the Management Company took over on June 1<sup>st</sup> and since that time the hospital has been on an upward trend. He stated the hospital was operating in a \$600,000 deficit every month; but that has been cut in half because positive things are happening now. He stated they have added 7 new physicians and has retained 1 physician to the community. Mr. Olsen introduced Dorminy Medical Center CEO Mel Pine.

Mr. Pine stated they are focusing on a five year strategic plan with the Hospital Authority Board. They will focus on a list of proprieties each year until everything has been accomplished. The strategic plan is called Vision 2020 and the targeted years will include 2015 to 2020. He encouraged the importance of the community supporting the hospital. He also stated he think they have some superb physicians on board.

#### **Sandy Hester/Little Free Library**

Library Director Sandy Hester presented Little Free Library program to the Commissioners. She stated this project will facilitate access to reading materials for all residents of our community. She is searching for sponsors to build or purchase weather proof boxes to house the books. All books will be donated. She asked the Commissioners if they thought any zoning problems exist.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the program. 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.

### **Constitutional Officer: NONE**

#### **Department Head Reports:**

Road Superintendent Tim Kegebein gave a brief update on all the activity at the Road Department.

County Extension Coordinator Jeri Gilleland gave a brief update on all the activity at the 4H Office. She introduced the new Agricultural & Natural Resource Agent Blake Crabtree.

Mr. Crabtree thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve Ben Hill County. He stated he was already putting a face to his name in the community. He also gave an update on agricultural.

Ben Hill County Development Authority Executive Director Courtney gave an update on all the activity for the Ben Hill County Development Authority and Ben Hill County Revolving Loan Fund.

### **County Board Report: NONE**

## **County Manager's Report:**

County Manager Frank Feild reported the following:

### *Grant Funds*

The County has seen over a million dollars in new grants coming in since the last Commission meeting. Although a grant always includes additional work for the staff, it allows us to do important things that are needed without raising taxes. The following are the grants and the amounts: 2014 CDBG - \$ 500,000, 2015 LMIG - \$ 302,088, 2014 Off-System Safety - \$ 58,742, EMA - \$ 69,000, 2014 USDA RBEG - \$ 80,000, USDA Revolving Loan Fund - \$ 100,000, and ACCG Employee Wellness - \$ 2,000.

### *Development Authority*

Over 3,000 people attended the "Summer Nights in the Park" on August 9<sup>th</sup> during the Grand Homecoming. This FREE event with live music by local musicians and local vendors was an incredible draw. People brought their barbecue grills and had family cook-outs. Local meat markets, dollar stores and small businesses say they sold-out on most of their picnic supplies and food. This is a classic example of a planned event that puts money in the pockets of local merchants; and also impacts our LOST and SPLOST revenues. The last concert of the season is September 6<sup>th</sup> from 4-10 p.m. More information is posted on the County website at [www.benhillcounty.com](http://www.benhillcounty.com).

The Annual State of the Port Address is being held in Savannah on Sep. 25<sup>th</sup>. The Development Authority of Ben Hill County has organized a trip for interested community leaders; which includes a guided tour of the Port of Savannah the following day. This is an excellent opportunity for community leaders to spend time together showcasing our community and what it has to offer the international logistics community.

Courtney Whitman recently completed the International Economic Development Council's Marketing and Attraction Course in Atlanta. Afterwards, the course instructor selected her, and our community, to receive free follow-on help in upgrading our Economic Development webpage. This review was extremely helpful, and we are delighted by the professional recognition Courtney continues to bring to Ben Hill County.

The Revolving Loan Fund closed another \$65,000 loan for a local business to expand. This company processed 740 deer last year and estimates it will increase to 1,000 by the end of this year. This expansion includes constructing a new facility, creating 5 new jobs, and adding goat meat processing to the services the company offers.

### *Departmental Study & Staffing Study*

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government Team has completed the Departmental Review; but is still waiting for some information they have requested from 911 before they can finalize it.

### *Municode*

We received the Draft Update of our codes from MUNICODE last week, and provided electronic copies to each department and constitutional office that attended the initial meeting. We hope to complete our review by mid-October and get it finalized.

**Annexation Request: NONE**

**Rezoning Application: NONE**

## **Alcohol Application: NONE**

### **Old Business:**

#### **Zoning Application/Ms. Rodriguez**

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to allow Ms. Rodriguez a special exemption to add another mobile home on her property on Red Bluff Road as long as she owns the property. 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.

#### **RBEG Grant Award Ceremony**

Quinton Robinson, the Georgia State Director of the USDA, will be visiting Ben Hill County on September 17<sup>th</sup> to present us with \$ 80,000 for the RBEG Grant. He will be accompanied by a U.S. Senator or Congressman and other USDA officials. The ceremony will be held at 11:00 a.m. at the Eco Boutique.

#### **Vietnam Traveling Wall**

The Traveling Wall will be in Ashburn September 4th-7th. The exhibit will be open 24-hours a day and will be located just off I-75, Exit 82 on the Carroll's Sausage property; next to the large American flag and adjacent to the Big Peanut Monument.

The opening Memorial Ceremony will be at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. Ben Hill County and The City of Fitzgerald will be honoring the servicemen from our community who died in Vietnam, and invite all our citizens to attend this ceremony.

#### **Public Transportation**

We solved the problem of insurance for the public transportation vehicles when we changed the County's General Liability Policy on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

I will attend a Drug & Alcohol Training Class in Macon October 22-24; which is the last DOT requirement standing in the way of us starting up a 5311 Public Transportation Program.

DOT is processing our application for the program. We agreed to start-up the Ben Hill County Program with 3 new vehicles, and an 18-month grant beginning in January. As soon as our grant is approved, DOT will order our new vehicles. However, we should not expect them to be delivered any earlier than March 2015. Since we plan to use a 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor to operate the system, we will have to bid it out.

We still have the option of starting-up the program earlier, at County expense, using the pre-owned vehicles we acquired. However, once we are approved for the 5311 Grant funding, these vehicles will require special inspection, certification and reporting if we are to continue using them as part of the public transportation program.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to delay the 5311 program until the grant is received. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan.

## **Ceramic Handprint**

No update.

## **Communication Tower Update**

The FAA and FCC have approved the construction of the communications tower next to the solid waste collection site on Joshlyn Road. We have a draft contract which needs legal review by the County Attorney and the Commission before we proceed.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to authorize the County Attorney to conduct a legal review of the contract so it can be put on the Agenda for Decision at the September 24<sup>th</sup> Special Called Meeting. 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.

## **2014 CDBG Contract**

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Admin Contract and authorize the Chairman to sign it. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan.

## **New Business:**

### **Voting Delegate/ACCG Legislative Conference**

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to nominate Commissioner Daniel Cowan as the voting delegate for the ACCG Legislative Conference. 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.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to allocate funds from the Queensland Water and Health Department budget to fund a Code Enforcement Officer position. Commissioner Scott Downing seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter, Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan.

### **Executive Session/Pending Litigation**

County Attorney stated because of time, she will send a letter to the Commissioners concerning pending litigation.

### **Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE**

### **Legislative Report:**

Commissioner Scott Downing reported he attended the Transportation Study meeting in Tifton. He stated CXS were present voicing their frustration. Mr. Downing stated the meeting was a good session. He reported the Transportation Study meeting will be meeting in Macon tomorrow.

**Commissioner's Remarks: NONE**

Meeting adjourned

\_\_\_\_\_ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk