

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON JUNE 25, 2014 AT 4:00 PM IN THE
BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follow:

Philip C. Jay III	Chairman
OD Netter	Vice-Chairman
Daniel Cowan	Commissioner
Frank Feild	County Manager
Donna Prather	County Clerk

Commissioner Bennie Calloway and Commissioner Scott Downing were absent.

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

2013 Audit

County Manager Frank Feild stated the 2013 Audit shows our budget vs. actual net revenue was \$ 332,084. Considering we had a \$ 9.4 M budget, this is a 3 ½ % positive variance. The Auditors are very pleased with our performance. Mr. Feild pointed out that our 2011 Audit showed only 3 Departments were under budget; with everyone else overspending. We implemented a number of controversial belt-tightening measures in 2012; and completed the year with 13 Departments and Constitutional Offices under budget. For 2013, we cut the budget proportionally by a million dollars; and this Audit shows 23 Departments and Constitutional Offices have finished the year under budget. This has been a difficult time, and every Department Head and Constitutional Officer deserves a lot of credit for their fiscal performance.

Pat Ashley of Meeks CPA gave a brief summary of the 2013 Annual Financial Report. He also handed out draft copies to the Commissioners. Mr. Ashley stated everything looks good and the fund balance has increased.

Budget Request

Public Defender/Tim Eidson

Tim Eidson of the Public Defender's Office asked the Commissioners for additional funding for personnel staff at the Public Defender's Office in the amount of \$37,584.75. He stated his office don't have enough personnel staff move cases in a timely manner because of the increase in cases in Ben Hill County.

Chamber Magazine

County Manager Frank Feild stated the Chamber has contracted with Cal Duke Publishing of St. Simons Island to sell advertising and produce a slick-page, 4-color Relocation & Community Guide. The last guide was produced around 2004 and the County had a Prime Cover Ad on page 2. This same page ad will now cost us \$3,450. In addition, the Mayor of Fitzgerald has asked us to split a Joint Service page Ad with them; which will cost the County an additional \$1,020. The total being requested is \$ 4,470. I have advised their salesman that this is not in our budget, and the Commission would have to approve it. Chairman Jay asked me to put this on the agenda.

Cecil Strickland of Cal Duke Publishing from St. Simon submitted the last copy of this publication that Ben Hill County participated in. He stated this is a good way to get industries to move into our community and create jobs. He also submitted a handout titled What 100 New Industrial Jobs Mean To A Community.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve purchasing the advertisement up to \$4,000.00 with Cal Duke Publishing. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter and Daniel Cowan both voting on the motion.

Disable American Veterans Registration

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve giving Ken Andrews a check for \$150.00 to hand deliver to the Disable American Veterans National Convention to register all veterans in Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter and Daniel Cowan both voting on the motion.

Queensland School Historical Plaque

Mr. Connie Graham addressed the Commissioners concerning the Queensland Negro Industrial School. He stated he was doing some historical research on the school for the Grand Homecoming and discovered that it had been 100 years since its first commencement. He stated the original school is no longer there but he would like to put a plaque on the site to commemorate the 100 years. He is asking the Commissioners to fund this project.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to authorize County Manager Frank Field to work on the Queensland project with Mr. Connie Graham. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter and Daniel Cowan both voting on the motion.

Employee Health Insurance

County Manager Frank Field stated after discussing with ACCG and Blue Cross, we are setting up special provisions in our plan to incentivize employees. If employees do certain things, such as enroll in a smoking cessation program or walk a certain number of miles per week, the Blue Cross plan will give them reward credits. Blue Cross will pay for this;

not us; and it does not increase our premiums. Statistically, Blue Cross recognizes that these activities will produce healthier employees and reduce claims; so the reward credits are a good investment. Using the results of an employee survey we did earlier this year, we are developing a list of things they say they would be willing to do. This list will be included in our plan when it is renewed.

We realize that we must aggressively work to reduce the number and cost of our claims. This requires good leadership, education, and creating a wellness environment. This requires good leadership, education, and creating a wellness environment.

- We will establish and maintain wellness rooms at central locations so all of our employees;
- We will put greater emphasis on wellness and monitoring those employees who we know have health problems;
- With the help of local medical practitioners, we will develop new educational outreach efforts to encourage employees to move towards healthier lifestyles.

Mr. Feild believes all of these self-help initiatives will show ACCG that we are serious about employee wellness and should result in us getting more dollars in the next wellness grant.

Mr. Field presented a power-point presentation that provided four (4) options for renewing the employee health insurance. His recommendation is option 2 that includes a \$3500.00 deductible, 20% coinsurance. The monthly premium will be \$532.93 and will county \$620,330 with the 97 employee enrolled. The employee contribution will be 15% and cost the employee \$35.53 per pay period.

After further discussion, Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the County Manager's recommendation for option two (2). Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter and Daniel Cowan both voting on the motion.

2014 Budget Review

County Manager Frank Feild stated we are half way through the 2014 Budget. While it looks like we are on track overall, the Departments are beginning to show strain from operating on a tight budget with cost and demands steadily increasing.

Mr. Field stated we are facing a projected reduction in the tax digest; which would normally suggest we raise the millage rate to balance the budget. However, the School Board is already planning to put another 2 mills in taxes on our citizens; and this will severely limit our options.

Mr. Field mentioned we are becoming increasingly concerned about our combined millage rates; as opposed to those of our neighbors. Not only do they put a greater burden on our citizens, but they discourage businesses from relocating here.

Budget Amendments

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to amend the General Administration Government budget by \$250.00 to pay for second survey of the communications tower site. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to amend the EMS budget by \$3345.90 to upgrade two cardiac monitors. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman OD Netter and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

The meeting was adjourned.

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk