

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON MARCH 3, 2015 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
Toni Sawyer	County Attorney

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

Pastor 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 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.

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

Public Comments:

Georgia Hunting Fishing Federation Ben Hill –Irwin Chapter President Ronny Blackstock invited the Commissioners to the 1st Annual Youth Fishing Rodeo to be held at Paulk Park on Saturday, April 11, 2015.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes held on February 03, 2015. 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 Minutes held on February 12, 2015. 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.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes held on February 23, 2015. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion. Vice-Chairman OD Netter abstained from the motion.

Constitutional Officer: NONE

Department Head Reports:

County Extension 4H Agent Jeri Gelliland gave an update of all activities for Ben Hill 4H.

Executive Director of Economic Development Courtney Whitman gave an update of all activity concerning the Development Authority of Ben Hill County. She introduced Department of Juvenile Justice Gwendolyn Slacks. Mrs. Slacks explained an opportunity to receive a grant that will target at-risk youth between the ages 16-24 years of age in Ben Hill County. She is asking for support from Ben Hill County.

County Board Reports:

Mr. Connie Graham gave an update on all activities concerning the Community Service Board.

County Manager's Report:

County Manager Frank Feild reported the following:

South Metro Development Outlook Conference

Mr. Field reported he met with Todd Long, Deputy DOT Commissioner, at South Metro Development Outlook Conference in Atlanta on February 18th. Mr. Long wants us to visit him and bring the senator and representative.

Department of Transportation District Engineer

Chad Hartley replaced Joe Sheffield as the new DOT District Engineer.

DOT has a new reversal Express Lane Project that begins along I-75 south of Atlanta at SR 155 / McDonough Road and ends at SR 138 / Stockbridge Hwy, and includes approximately 12 miles of managed lanes. The proposed project consists of the addition of two reversible express lanes located within the median of I-75, to be managed by a variable priced tolling system. These lanes will be designed to improve traffic flow, increase options for motorists and transit and registered vanpool customers, provide reliable trip times, create jobs and bring economic benefits to the residents of this region.

County Codes and Ordinances

Ordinances are now posted on the County website at www.benhillcounty.com.

We have also posted a notice advising citizens who have questions about our ordinances or recommended changes to send them in writing to the County Manager.

Communications Tower

We are working closely with the FAA and FCC on the tower project. We have not finalized a contract for the Commission's review, but have been keeping individual Commissioners informed of our progress.

Maintenance

Our Maintenance Department has installed new LED lighting around County buildings. This has made a huge difference in security at night and will help reduce our electricity bills.

Federal Building

Environmental testing and foundation specialists have inspected the Federal Building, and we are refining a plan to clean it up for adaptive reuse.

Roads & Rail Crossings

We met with CSX on February 12th at the Boxwood Road Crossing. A week earlier, a loaded truck had become high-centered on the tracks and had to be pulled free by two tractors. CSX agreed to level the crossing by upgrading the road surface and shoulders; and we will rock the portion of the road between the tracks and Lower Rebecca. This will make it much safer for vehicular traffic and reduce the possibility of a collision.

We have been told that CSX is quickly approaching capacity on their main line running thru Ben Hill County, and have promised to help them find workable solutions.

DOT Study

DOT is doing a Preliminary Engineering Study for a round-about; and is putting it in the State Transportation Plan (STIP). In the interim, they did a safety survey; which identified and recommended things the County could do, and things that DOT would do to make the intersection safer. Within a month, our Road Department had installed 6 sets of rumble strips on Lower Rebecca at County-expense. DOT moved the stop lines on Lower Rebecca closer to the intersection; which will help drivers see clearly to their left and right when they stop. DOT also replaced the 36" stop signs with 48" stop signs. On February 13th, DOT added approach warning lights on SR 90. The lights were connected on February 19th, and the overhead warning lights removed.

This is still a very dangerous intersection, and the County will continue to do all we can to make it safer.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Old Business:

Tax Anticipation Note

Vice Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the Tax Anticipation Note Resolution with Community Bank, Planter First Bank, and Colony Bank in the amount of \$2,500,000.00 with a fixed interest rate of 3.25%, authorize the Chairman to sign the document, and the County Clerk to attest the document. 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.

Transportation Update

We have completed the contract with RMS as our Third Party Operator; and are ordering the computer and printer. We have offered RMS space in our Maintenance Department parking area for the 3 vans, and administrative office space in the County Offices. We have requested a dedicated phone number from Windstream that will be easy to remember for the Ben Hill Transit System.

RMS is looking for opportunities to bid on other transportation contracts in Ben Hill County; to include those issued by state agencies. They will also be offering contract services to businesses that want to provide their employees transportation to and from their workplaces. All of these contracts will help offset the financial loss of operating a public transit service.

DOT has not confirmed when the 3 new vans with lifts will be delivered. However, we estimate it will be later this month, and that we may be able to start-up the Ben Hill Public Transit Service in April. The County will be putting out detailed information as we get closer to the start-up.

New Business:

ACCG Resolution Amended and Restated Plan

Vice-Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the amendment to the ACCG Resolution. 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.

JAG Probation Service Agreement/Magistrate

Vice Chairman OD Netter made a motion to approve the JAG Probation Service Agreement for Magistrate Court. 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.

Executive Session/Pending Litigation

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

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

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Commissioner Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to deny the Cacara Powell, mother of Taliyah Sutton, TaiKya Powell, and Tanyah Powell claim. 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:

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to change the agenda by adding Animal Control Ordinance to the agenda. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Scott Downing, Commissioner Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to amend the Animal Control ordinance to reflect State Law regarding rabies. Commissioner Daniel Cowan seconded the motion.

After further discussion, Commissioner Scott Downing made a motion to amend the motion by stating when the State changes the Animal Control Ordinance; Ben Hill County will automatically adopt the same policy. 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.

Legislative Report:

Commissioner Scott Downing gave an update on HB 170 Transportation Funding Bill.

Vice Chairman OD Netter reported grant information for bridges. He stated he will get all the information to County Manager Frank Field.

Mr. Netter reported NACO has a new health, dental, and vision program that might help reduce Ben Hill County cost on health insurance. He mentioned we need to get this information out to the public as well.

Commissioner's Remarks: NONE

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk