

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE BEN HILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON JULY 12, 2016 AT 6:30 PM IN THE
BEN HILL COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Philip C. Jay III	Chairman
Daniel Cowan	Vice-Chairman
Bennie Calloway	Commissioner
John Mooney	Commissioner
Frank Feild	County Manager
Donna Prather	County Clerk
Toni Sawyer	County Attorney

Call to Order

Chairman Philip Jay III called the meeting to order.

Pastor Bennie Calloway gave the invocation.

Everyone gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments To The Rules Of Order

No action was taken

Approval of the Agenda/Agenda Changes

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to amend the agenda by adding Ben Hill County DFAC Board appointment to New Business. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Public Comments:

Ricky Kellum want the approval of the Commissioners to place a modular home on his property located at 472 Benjamin Hill Drive to care for his wife elderly parents instead of placing them in the nursing home. He stated once the modular home was no longer needed, it would be removed from the property.

Acceptance of Prior Minutes

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes held on June 2, 2016. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes held on June 6, 2016. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes held on June 7, 2016. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Special Called Meeting Minutes held on June 28, 2016. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

Constitutional Officer:

Sheriff Mclemore reported he and his officers will be attending a courthouse security class in Cordele Thursday, July 14, 2016. He mentioned he uses anywhere from five (5) to twelve (12) officers doing Courthouse security while court is in session. The number of officers is determined by the type of case. He extended an invitation to the Commissioners to attend by the class by way of Judge Bobby Chasteen. He stated the Judge would like to see at least two Commissioners attend the class.

Department Head Reports: NONE

County Board Reports:

Library Director Martha Power-Jones gave a report to Commissioners concerning all the activists that are happening at the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library during the summer. She also thanked the Commissioners and the community for their support of the Library.

County Manager's Report:

2016 Tax Digest

The County's 2016 Tax Digest and 5-Year History of Levy were published in The Herald-Leader on July 6th and will be published again on July 13th. They were also posted on the County website at www.benhillcounty.com. The advertisements included Notices of a Public Hearing on July 22nd at 6:00 p.m. and Adoption of the tentative Rollback Millage at a Special Called Meeting following the Public Hearing.

County Budget

The Commission and staff met on July 7th to discuss strategies for the 2016 and 2017 County Budget. The staff was instructed to review what happened in the 2015 budget, plan to immediately amend the 2016 budget, and develop new fiscal protocols for 2017.

We will be meeting with Constitutional Officers and Department Heads to discuss things like eliminating non-essential travel and greater fiscal discipline. We are focusing on increasing the fund balance, rigorously enforcing the purchase order system, and implementing a line-item budget for 2017.

Forest Land Protection Act

There has been a great deal of alarm over the Department of Revenue's recently imposed cap on Forest Land Protection Act grants. It will have a dramatic effect on many counties that have not been regularly updating the fair market values of their properties. In several cases, they will lose over \$100,000 in revenues.

We have 80 FLPA tracts on our digest; and Joyce Merritt insures they are updated every year. So we don't have a problem. This is another testimonial to the outstanding staff work that goes unrecognized in our Tax Assessor's Office every day.

Health Fair

The County Employee Health Fair was hosted at the Senior's Center on June 21st. We had 23 vendors and 43 employees participate, and there were plenty of quality door prizes given out. We'd like to thank Cathy Posey and Pamela Turner for a great job, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway for supporting it.

EMS

The EMS performed 82 out-of-town transports during the month of June and collected \$95,245 in revenues. This is nearly 3 out-of-town transports a day. During the first half of 2016, EMS has collected \$489,801; which does not include the revenues for the 82 transports.

Road Resurfacing

The Road Department recently completed resurfacing .523 miles of roads using 2017 LMIG and 2011 SPLOST funds. They include Gaff Ave., Jennifer Ln., and Lisa Ln.; all of which connect to Justice Ave. A portion of Player Cemetery Rd. in the northwestern part of the county was also resurfaced.

Perry House Road Bridge

GA Department of Transportation awarded a contract to Southern Concrete Company of Albany on July 1st to replace the Perry House Road Bridge. This company has built 98% of the bridges south of Macon and has an excellent reputation. A contractor from HNTB will oversee the design-build project for the GDOT Office of Innovative Delivery in Atlanta. We have contacted the District 4 Engineer and HNTB requesting press releases and copies of schedules as soon as they are available.

Annexation Request: NONE

Rezoning Application: NONE

Alcohol Application: NONE

Consent Items

County Manager Frank Feild stated the approval of this resolution would declare these items as excess, authorize the County Manager to dispose of them by public sale, and direct the revenues be returned to the respective department or the County General Fund.

Excess Property

- EMS Stretcher – The EMS has a power-flex cot which is no longer being used, and could generate some revenue to be returned to EMS.
- Courthouse Windows - These windows were custom ordered for the courthouse, but the County does not need them. They cost the county \$19,625.30, and are still crated. We have an unsolicited offer for \$12,000; but may be able to recoup our full investment.
- Property on Evergreen Road – The County owns 5-acres of undeveloped land on Evergreen Road which it acquired by tax deed, and foreclosed upon in 2011. The

County does not have any current or future use for this property, and it should be offered for public sale. There has been a serious inquiry about the property, and it has an appraised fair market value of \$25,000.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to approve the Excess Property Resolution declaring the items excess, authorize the County Manager to dispose of them by public sale, and direct the revenues be returned to the respective department or the County General Fund. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion; which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

1. Excess Property Resolution

Old Business:

Courthouse Windows

County Manager Frank Field reported requests for proposals were sent to the three (3) qualified vendors for historical preservation work. We received only one bid on the courthouse windows project by the July 1st deadline. The bid was from L. E. Harper Construction Co., and it identified Fourth Street Design as its sub-contractor. The bid has not been coordinated with the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Harper's base bid price was \$74,000 for the 1st and 2nd floor windows. Although we asked for separate bids for the windows on each floor, the bidder wants to do all of them at the same time. The company would be able to start on the job in the October-November time frame and complete it within 60-days.

This company has previously performed work for the City and County; we believe they will use high-quality materials and local craftsmen, and will buy materials from the closest building supply company. They also have the personal and professional endorsement of two commissioners.

Mr. Field stated this work was not budgeted for 2016, so we will have to find the money somewhere in the budget if the Commission decides to proceed.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan made a motion to accept the L. E. Harper Construction Co. bid for the courthouse windows project; that Commissioner John Mooney is designated to oversee this project and coordinate with the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Chairman be authorized to sign the necessary documents. Commissioner John Mooney seconded the motion, which passed with Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, Commissioner John Mooney, and Commissioner Bennie Calloway all voting for the motion.

New Business:

Public Defender 2017 Contract

County Manager Frank Feild stated we have received a proposed FY 2017 contract from the Cordele Judicial Circuit Public Defender; which covers the period July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017. This contract includes a 3% pay raise for state employees.

Ben Hill's portion of the contract is \$89,292. Other counties contributing to the Cordele Judicial Circuit Public Defender's Office include Crisp, Dooley and Wilcox counties. The breakdown is based on population; with Crisp paying 42%, Dooley paying 14%, Wilcox paying 5% and Ben Hill paying 39%.

In FY 2015, Ben Hill County paid the Public Defender's Office \$25,547. Following an agreed settlement to a legal case, the payments were increased to \$87,495 in FY 2016. At the time, the Commission was advised by the County Attorney that this increase was for a 1-year period; and payments could revert to the previous payment level at the end of FY 2016 if the Commission so desired.

If the Commission chooses to renew this contract at the FY 2015 level, it could result in over \$30,000 in savings for the County between now and December 31st; and an additional \$60,000 next year.

We contacted Crisp, Dooley and Wilcox Counties to see what they are doing. Wilcox determined their cost increase was only minimal, so they agreed to the new contract. Crisp has required the Public Defender to make adjustments; such as eliminating the raises. The Dooley Commission is not at all happy with the contract and tabled it.

After further discussing this agenda item, Commissioner John Mooney made a motion to postpone action on this contract, request an opinion from the County Attorney, and require the Public Defender to discuss it before making a decision. Commissioner Bennie Calloway seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner John Mooney, Commissioner Bennie Calloway, and Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan all voting for the motion.

Mr. Field stated in the interim, the staff will continue to make the monthly payments as approved in the 2016 County Budget.

Public Transportation 2017 Contract

County Manager Frank Feild reported DOT is preparing our 2017 Contract for the Public Transit program. They asked that we send them a resolution agreeing to the costs identified in this chart, authorize the payment of our 10% match, and designate the Chairman to sign the contract documents when we receive them. This is being done to expedite the ordering of the 3 new vans. The County's match is paid out of the 2011 SPLOST funds. We use a third party operator to manage and operate the Ben Hill Transit System, and they have been able to do it without costing the Ben Hill County taxpayers.

Commissioner Bennie Calloway made a motion to adopt the authorizing resolution agreeing to the costs identified in the resolution, authorize the payment of our 10% match, and designate the Chairman to sign the contract documents when we receive them. Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan seconded the motion; which passed with Commissioner Bennie Calloway, Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan, and Commissioner John Mooney all voting for the motion.

DLS Board Appointment/Leroy Dunnom Vacancy

DLS Director Keith Morris stated Leroy Dunnom has a desire to stay on the Board and has served on the Board for many years.

Commissioner John Mooney nominated Leroy Dunnom. Nominations were closed.

Ben Hill County DFAC Board/Ann Wood Vacancy

Commissioner Cowan stated Ann Wood resigned from the Ben Hill County DFAC Board and they are in need of a replacement.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Cowan nominated Debra Weil. Nominations were closed.

Agenda Changes and/or add ons: NONE

Legislative Report: NONE

Commissioner's Remarks:

Meeting adjourned

_____ Philip C. Jay III, Chairman

_____ Donna R. Prather, County Clerk