

7/18/2024 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Present at the meeting was Chairman Jesse Crews, Commissioner Alphya Benefield, Commissioner James Everett, Commissioner Drew Jones, Commissioner Luke Gowen, County Administrator Hampton Raulerson, County Attorney John Adams, HR/Finance Coordinator Rebecca Harden, and Deputy Clerk Madeline Nettles.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

The invocation was led by Commissioner Benefield.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Jones made a motion to add Consider Appointment to Board of Elections under agenda item #7. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Benefield motioned to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Gowen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Everett made a motion to adopt the minutes. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT (SECOND MEETING)

Commissioner Benefield motioned to accept the financial report. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. CONSIDER BUDGET AMENDMENT #1

County Administrator Raulerson presented the revenue line items and expenditures that needed to be adjusted. County Administrator Raulerson explained that all changes to revenue and expenditures would come out to be even. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the budget changes. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. CONSIDER REPAIRS TO THE COUNTY ANNEX BUILDING

Brian Grayson, a representative from Gordian, was present to answer questions. County Administrator Raulerson provided an overview of the work that needs to be done to the annex building, which was included in the proposal by Gordian. Mr. Grayson informed the board that Gordian manages a state contract through the State Administrative Services. They provide an option comparative to the typical building process in which the county acquires the scope of work and estimate up front. Then once approved by the Board, a pricing proposal would be built around the scope of work. Mr. Grayson said the benefit to the county is gaining access to credible contractors upfront who assist with the scope of work and pricing process. Gordian can be used as needed, where the county does not pay for services until a proposal is

approved. Commissioner Jones made a motion to table the topic while financing options are researched. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA: CONSIDER APPOINTMENT TO BOARD OF ELECTIONS Commissioner Gowen motioned to appoint Mrs. Lenora "Jo" Dube to the Board of Elections. Commissioner Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. DISCUSS NUISANCE ORDINANCE PROPOSAL

County Administrator Raulerson presented a draft ordinance to the board stating that this is the same proposal brought forth in June, with no changes. County Administrator Raulerson informed the board that the ordinance will be voted on twice and be advertised to the public before the ordinance can be passed. Commissioner Benefield asked if this ordinance would, if adopted, be made available to the public in a way that could be easily understood. County Administrator Raulerson stated that they would release the ordinance and a summary through the newspaper and hold a public hearing regarding the matter. He also said a draft can be placed up on the public website. Commissioner Everett expressed concern about people losing their home if it were to be condemned. County Administrator Raulerson explained that if a home has been condemned, then people cannot reside there under current procedure. Commissioner Everett asked if the county has anything to help those individuals. County Administrator Raulerson stated that the county currently does not have any programs to help rehome individuals, but there are non-profit organizations that may. Commissioner Jones shared concern about the portion of the ordinance specifying a 100-foot distance, which would cause most properties to be out of compliance. He would like to see if the distance specifications could be adjusted. Commissioner Benefield explained to the gallery public offset for the purpose of firefighting. No action was taken by the board at this time.

9. DISCUSS TIMBER HARVESTING ORDINANCE

County Administrator Raulerson present the model ordinance from the Georgia Forestry Commission and the ACCG, as authorized by House Bill 897 of 2020. He stated that this ordinance would also need to be advertised and public hearings be held. Commissioner Benefield asked if the information has changed since it was last considered. County Administrator Raulerson confirmed that the information was the same. No action was taken by the board at this time.

10. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RURAL FIRE DEFENSE COOPERATIVE LEASE AGREEMENT
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Commissioner Everett made a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

11. CONSIDER AMENDMENT TO INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR MUTUAL AID BETWEEN BAKER
COUNTY AND CHARLTON COUNTY

Commissioner Gowen motioned to approve the amendment. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Benefield. The motion carried unanimously.

12. CONSIDER SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Commissioner Gowen asked if the agreement would adequately cover the officers. County Administrator stated that he believes so but would have to review it. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

13. CONSIDER UPDATES FOR USE OF COUNTY BUILDING AND FACILITY POLICIES

County Administrator Raulerson presented the policy and price change recommendations and presented Deputy Clerk Nettles to answer any questions from the board. Commissioner Gowen asked about the section requiring liability insurance. County Administrator Raulerson stated that liability insurance is required upon request by the county. Commissioner Gowen made a motion to adopt the policy and price change recommendations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Benefield. Commissioner Everett asked about the reason behind the administrative fees and asked if the prices were comparable to surrounding counties. Deputy Clerk Nettles explained that the administrative fees were to recoup costs incurred outside business hours and prices were based on surrounding local governments. The board voted and the motion to adopt the changes passed unanimously.

14. CONSIDER REQUEST TO USE OLD UNISON BUILDING

County Administrator Raulerson presented both current requests to use the county building. Homeland City Council-person Delbert Shelton has requested to use it for a food bank and Sheriff Robert Phillips has requested to use it for the animal shelter. County Administrator Raulerson said the building needs repairs and cannot house food goods now. The board took no action at this time. Commissioner Gowen proposed that the board consider a third option, such as to surplus the building.

15. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FIRE GEAR

County Administrator Raulerson presented the updates to the quotes and recommended staying with the vendor initially voted on during the last meeting, despite changes to the quote, as they have already gone forward with taking measurements. Commissioner Gowen asked if this purchase has been brought to the Fire Board's attention, which it has not been. He recommended all decisions on items like this be taken through the Fire Board. Chairman Crews asked the Deputy Clerk to add this item to the Fire Board's agenda. Commissioner Gowen moved to approve the purchase of fire gear. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

16. CONSIDER AUTHORIZING TAX COMMISSIONER TO WAIVE TAX LATE FEES AND PENALTIES

Commissioner Gowen made a motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

17. RECOGNIZE ALEXANDER LAND COMPANY FOR GIFT OF PROPERTY

County Administrator Raulerson informed the board that the county had been gifted 2.41 acres near Camp Pickney Boat Ramp by the Alexander Land Company. The county is waiting for the original copy of the deed, and upon receipt of it, it will be filed at the

courthouse.

18. PUBLIC COMMENTS: (PLEASE LIMIT TO 3 MINUTES)

Mrs. Davis said she agrees with Commissioner Everett about not putting poor people out of their homes, referring to the discussion about the nuisance ordinance. Ms. Melodey Martindale, Executive Director of the Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce, invited the commissioners to the Business After Hours event on July 23rd, 2024, from 3-6 PM at the Inn at Folkston, and for Select Homes Center on August 22nd, 2024, from 3-5 PM. Ms. Martindale informed the board that she will be scheduled a meeting with everyone that attended the Rural Institute to continue working on projects. Commissioner Everett asked if there were any brochures for the county. Ms. Martindale stated that the Chamber and Development Authority are currently working on developing brochures. The Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge has donated money to help complete the map and brochures project.

Mrs. Jo Dube referred to the nuisance ordinance discussion during her comments, agreeing with Commissioner Jones about the concern for 100ft specifications being too big for most properties. Mrs. Dube asked if anyone had considered what would happen to the hospital. County Administrator Raulerson stated that they are trying to address the hospital, as Code Enforcement has been picking up recently. Commissioner Gowen stated that the ordinance would allow the county to get the process moving.

19. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Benefield thanked the public for their concern, support, and attendance. She thanked the staff for their assistance during the retreat, thanked the board for their input, and thanked all the guests who had attended the retreat.

Commissioner Gowen said the retreat was very productive, as the county was able to make moves towards its goals.

Commissioner Jones shared his appreciation for having Ms. Martindale and Ms. Nettles on board with the county. Commissioner Everett shared states regarding his passion about the county as well. Chairman Crews asked Deputy Clerk Nettles to remind the Fire Board about the meeting on Monday.

20. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF REQUIRED)

No executive session required.

21. NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 1, 2024 AT 6:00 PM

22. ADJOURN

Commissioner Benefield made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.

Jesse A. Crews, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Deputy Clerk