

CHARLTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE ROOM
68 KINGSLAND DRIVE, SUITE B
FOLKSTON, GA 31537
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17TH, 2024
6:00 PM

10/17/2024 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Present was Chairman Jesse Crews, Commissioner Alphya Benefield, Commissioner James Everett, Commissioner Drew Jones, Commissioner Luke Gowen, Interim County Administrator David Headley, HR/Finance Coordinator Rebecca Harden, and County Clerk Madeline Nettles.

Absent was County Attorney John Adams.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Benefield led the invocation.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Everett made a motion to add two amendments to the agenda. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Benefield made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA: CONSIDER CORRECTING TYPO ON 9/19/2024 MINUTES FROM "\$135" TO "\$130"

Commissioner Gowen motion to correct the typo. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Everett made a motion to adopt all three sets of minutes. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT (SECOND MEETING)

HR/Finance Coordinator Harden confirmed that the financial reports were in order

Commissioner Benefield made a motion to approve. Commissioner Gowen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. HEAR FROM DR. MELAD SMITH

Dr. Melad Smith addressed the board regarding a moving permit for a triple wide trailer that was expired. He discussed the issues that occurred while attempting to move the trailer that impeded his ability to complete the task before the expiration of the permit. Dr. Smith asked the board to approve with him completing the project. Dr. Smith stated that the last time he spoke with the board, he was told that there be no issue with receiving an extension and the fees were to be waived.

Commissioner Benefield asked questions regarding the permit.

Donald Glover, with Code Enforcement, clarified that a letter must be provided to their office with an explanation as to with an extension is needed. Mr. Glover stated that their office has not received such letter from Mr. Smith.

Interim County Administrator Headley asked for clarification from Dr. Smith, confirming that Dr. Smith is asking the board to waive the fees associated with the renewal of the permit.

Commissioner Gowen commented about the board's past actions in similar situations, which was to deny the waiving of fees.

Dr. Smith, Mr. Glover, Interim County Administrator Headley, and the board had more discussion regarding the situation.

Commissioner Crews relinquished the chair to Commissioner Benefield at 6:20 PM. Commissioner Crews made a motion to deny the request to waive the fees associated with renewing the permit. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. The motion carried with four votes in favor, casted by Commissioner Crews, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Benefield, and Commissioner Gowen, with 1 vote opposed casted by Commissioner Everett. Commissioner Benefield relinquished the chair back to Commissioner Crews at 6:21 PM.

Dr. Smith addressed the board again, asking why he is now allowed to do his own electrical and plumbing work on the trailers he moves into Charlton County, when he can do so in other counties. Chairman Crews asked about Dr. Smith's licenses to do so. Dr. Smith stated that is an installer. Commissioner Jones discussed that it is required to be certified and have the proper licenses to do so. The board, Dr. Smith, and Mr. Glover has some conversation regarding this topic.

Chairman Crews ended the discussion at 6:28 PM, thanking Dr. Smith for his time.

7. HEAR FROM ROBERTA HENRY REGARDING REQUEST FOR VARIANCE

Roberta Henry was present when the meeting was called to order, but was not present at the time the item was called. Chairman Crews explained the situation and previous actions by the board on this topic. Chairman Crews stated that the board had previously waived all permit fees for Ms. Henry, but she never returned to complete the variance paperwork.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to approve the variance, pending completion of the electrician and plumber certifications on the home. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

8. CONSIDER MILLAGE RATE

HR/Finance Coordinator Harden discussed the millage rate, as it was advertised. Commissioner Crews

acknowledged it being the lowest millage rate the board has seen.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the millage rate. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion.

Commissioner Gowen commended the board for the work they had done to increase the county reserves and lower the millage rate over the past few years. Commissioner Gowen commended Chairman Crews for the letter he sent to department heads regarding the budget and commended the department heads for working to tighten down on spending.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. CONSIDER GRANT PROPOSAL

Commissioner Gowen motioned to bring the Grant Proposal off the table. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Interim County Administrator Headley provided a brief update of his meeting with the county engineer, road superintendent and Commissioner Benefield. The county engineer would be able to work on the grant application for a project or several projects that are known issues within the county.

Commissioner Jones motioned to pursue the grant with the county engineer's support. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA: DISCUSS DOG NUISANCE ORDINANCE

Commissioner Gowen explained that he would like to get an ordinance in place to address the issue with dogs entering private property and vandalizing it.

Sheriff Robert Phillips stated that they can work on an ordinance and voiced his concerns about what to do with animals that would need to be taken, especially if they are aggressive.

Commissioner Gowen suggested that the ordinance include a compounding fee for violations.

Sheriff Phillips stated that one of the issues he sees is not being able to identify the dog and the able. He stated that if there is no owner identified for the animal causing issues, then the animal would need to be taken, but there is nowhere to take the animals currently. Sheriff Phillips also stated that there would need to be facts to indicate who the owner is, or the owner would have the claim the animal, as they cannot just go off accusations and guesses.

Sheriff Phillips stated that he would do some research, draft an ordinance, and present it to the board.

Sheriff Phillips provided a brief update on the animal control project. He talked about several volunteers who have personally taken in several animals to try and help with the issue while they are working to get the project completed.

Commissioner Jones stated that the county needs a contingency plan until there is an animal control plan and animal control pound.

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

Ronald Williams asked the board if there were any ordinances in place regarding the smell from kenneled

dogs. Mr. Williams also talked about his experience having to run his neighbors' dogs off the property, which has caused the kennel dogs to start barking.

Mr. Williams stated that he thought the county attorney would be present tonight, so he could ask about a legal issue with his property. Mr. Williams stated that he has spoken with the Road Superintendent and the Interim County Administrator about the easement needed. Interim County Administrator Headley stated that he would be meeting with the county attorney later to discuss this issue.

Gary Tippins stated that he had to recently renew a permit for a project he is working on. Mr. Tippins made comments regarding Dr. Smith's earlier request. Donald Glover also made comments regarding the permitting process and consequences of moving a trailer without having a permit.

Gary Tippins also made comments in regard to the dog ordinance discussion and the animals that have been dropped off at his house.

11. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Gowen thanked Donald Glover for his work and the work the department has done for the county.

Chairman Crews asked Gary Tippins if there was if there had been any response regarding the Chamours situation. HR/Finance Coordinator Harden and Gary Tippins confirmed that they were waiting on a meeting to receive updates.

Commissioner Benefield thanked everyone for their support and what they do for the county. She warned about the current strain of COVID going around and asked everyone to remain safe.

Commissioner Gowen reiterated his comments about the lowest millage rate in county history being passed. He thanked the board, staff, and department heads for keeping within the budget.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF REQUIRED)

Commissioner Benefield made a motion to discuss possible personnel in executive session. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Sheriff Phillips stated that they have finally gotten everything to complete the project to put computers in the deputy cars. They are waiting on the towers to be finalized. Sheriff Phillips also reported that they received donated riot gear from the Department of Public Safety. GEO also donated funds to for the department to purchase riot helmets. Sheriff Phillips that they closely monitor the department budget, and they try to save money where they can.

Sheriff Phillips asked the board to consider buying back vacation time from the department, as it costs them significantly more money when someone takes a vacation. HR/Finance Coordinator clarified the current county policy regarding vacation buy back. Commissioners Jones stated that the board will be willing to revisit the discussion. Commissioner Gowen asked the Sheriff to get the board the numbers he discussed on paper for them to review further.

The Board, Interim County Administrator Headley, and County Clerk Nettles entered executive session at 7:10 PM. HR/Finance Coordinator Harden was excused from the meeting.

The Board, Interim County Administrator Headley, and County Clerk Nettles exited executive session at 7:32 PM. No action was taken during executive session.

Commissioner Gowen made a motion to advertise the top three (3) candidates for the County Administrator Position as Mr. Ronnie Pollock, Mrs. Rebecca Harden, and Mr. Glenn Hull. Commissioner Benefield seconded the motion. Chairman Crews clarified that the advertisement would run for 2 weeks in the newspaper and will be voted on in the next regular meeting. Commissioner Benefield asked that the candidates be listed in alphabetical order in the advertisement. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jones discussed the elections office and stated that the county needs to help support them with anything they need.

HR/Finance Coordinator Harden updated the board regarding the insurance broker meeting that happened earlier this morning. She will be bringing the final numbers to the board during the November 7th meeting for consideration. Commissioner Gowen stated that he would like to look at the budget to see what those numbers look like compared to what was expected.

13. NEXT MEETING: NOVEMBER 7TH, 2024 AT 6:00 PM IN THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM

14. ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Jesse A. Crews, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Clerk