

CHARLTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE ROOM
68 KINGSLAND DRIVE, SUITE B
FOLKSTON, GA 31537
THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 2025
5:00 PM

1/16/2025 - Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 5:08 PM.

Present was Chairwoman Alphya Benefield, Commissioner James Everett, Commissioner Drew Jones, Commissioner Luke Gowen, Commissioner Jesse Crews, County Administrator Glenn Hull, County Attorney John Adams, Director of Administrative Services Rebecca Harden, and County Clerk Madeline Nettles.

Guests present as recorded hereafter.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Gowen made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Crews seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SOLUTIONS RELATED TO ANIMALS IN CHARLTON COUNTY

County Administrator Hull discussed the proposed animal ordinance draft he had presented to the Board of Commissioners, highlighting the concept of a shelter, definition, of animal control officer, rabies tags requirements, and proposed fee schedule. County Administrator Hull stated that the proposed ordinance works within the law previously adopted by the Commissioners.

Representatives from Heart 2 Heart Humane Society were present for the discussion.

Commissioner Crews asked about the funding for the shelter. County Attorney Adams explained where the potential funds had come from. County Attorney Adams stated that the funds were limited and would not be renewable annually, which causes him concerns for the shelter's project after the initial funds have been spent.

Commissioner Crews asked who the animal control officer would be. County Administrator stated that he is just asking for guidance from the commissioner, as this was still in its early stages.

Commissioner Crews stated Heart 2 Heart is focused on the animal shelter, but the county is concerned about animals who are a nuisance to the community and are at large. Commissioner Crews stated that commissioners should consider this carefully, as he does not want to pass an ordinance that the county is not prepared to enforce.

Commissioner Crews asked Sheriff Robert Phillips if anyone currently employed at the sheriff's office could be appointed as an animal control officer. Sheriff Phillips denied having anyone that could be appointed, citing limited staff and time to carry out their current duties.

Sheriff Phillips shared that a current issue the department is facing is the inability to identify animals that

are causing issues in the community.

Commissioner Gowen and Commissioner Jones mentioned the conversation about a proposed animal ordinance during a previous meeting, where the idea was that all deputies under the Sheriff would be authorized to issue fines for nuisance animals and then the county would work with Heart 2 Heart Humane Society to work on the rest of the ordinance and the animal shelter at a later time.

Sheriff Phillips estimated that seventy-five percent (75%) of the animals he receives calls about are unidentifiable. Sheriff Phillips stated that the fine system would not resolve the issue of nuisance animals in the county.

Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Gowen discussed the legality of fines, complaint system, and citations with County Attorney Adams.

Representatives from Heart 2 Heart Humane Society discussed the issues they are facing with being able to move forward in the process. They stated that an ordinance has to be in place to access the funds for the shelter.

Chairwoman Benefield stated that the commissioners need to have something structured and based in research presented before moving forward with any proposed ordinances.

Commissioner Gowen asked if there were any objections from the board about moving forward with what was proposed. There were no objections from the board at this time. County Administrator Hull will take the ideas of the commissioners and bring another draft before them at a future meeting.

A representative asked where the money from collected fines would go, if the commissioners passed on ordinance with a fee schedule attached. The representative asked if the funds could be set aside to fund animal control. The commissioners stated that the funds would go to the county and allocating them towards animal control or reimbursing the sheriff for resources spent towards animal control could be discussed before anything was enacted.

DISCUSSION REGARDING CONCESSION SERVICES AT RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND EVENTS

Director of Parks and Recreation Joel Shivar provided an update about the concession services at recreational facilities and events.

Director Shivar is in the opinion that the concession services should remain the same as current. County Administrator Hull informed the Commissioners on how inventory will now be delivered, and operations are being simplified.

Commissioner Gowen asked that the restructuring will save the county time and money, which Director Shivar and County Administrator Hull confirmed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Agenda item was moved to the Charlton County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting at 6:00 PM on January 16th, 2025.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Gowen made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Crews seconded the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:59 PM.

Alphya Benefield, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Clerk