

CHARLTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
ST. GEORGE COMMUNITY ROOM
13063 FLORIDA AVENUE
ST. GEORGE, GA 31562
THURSDAY, JUNE 19TH, 2025
6:00 PM

6/19/2025 - Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Present was Chairwoman Alphya Benefield, Commissioner Jesse Crews, Commissioner James Everett, Commissioner Luke Gowen, County Attorney John Adams, Acting County Administrator Rebecca Harden, and County Clerk Madeline Nettles.

Absent was Commissioner Drew Jones.

Guests present as recorded hereafter.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Gowen led the invocation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Crews motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. MOTION TO ADOPT THE JUNE 5TH WORKSHOP AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Gowen motioned to adopt the June 5th workshop and regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. FIRST PUBLIC HEARING FOR SECTION 1-21 OF THE GENERAL CODE OF ORDINANCES

County Clerk Nettles read the draft ordinance amending section 1-21 and the draft ordinance repealing section 1-21.

Chairwoman Benefield opened the floor for public comments at 6:06 PM. No public comments were made.

County Attorney Adams had no remarks on either of the draft ordinances.

The first public hearing for section 1-21 of the general code of ordinances closed at 6:07 PM.

PETITIONS

1. PETITION TO WAIVE FEES AND INTEREST FROM R. REWIS

Commissioner Crews represented Mr. Rewis in the matter.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to waive the fees and interest for Mr. Rewis. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

PURCHASING ITEMS

1. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPANSION OF THE RECREATION PICKLEBALL COURTS

Joel Shivar, Director of Parks and Recreation, was present.

The courts that were previously put in have had people on them daily, if its not raining. The St. George community has requested a pickleball court be put in their area as well.

Mr. Shivar is requesting the board approve additional courts be put in. Eco Premier, who put the original two courts in, will be handling the expansion which is funded by 2020 SPLOST. The batting cages will be relocated to make room for the expansion.

Commissioner Gowen asked about location of the pickleball courts and other potential places.

Commissioner Benefield shared her experiences with the new courts and expressed that three people had recently told her that they had traveled to Charlton County to play pickleball.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to authorize the expansion of the pickleball courts. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR HARDEN TO PURCHASE CULVERT PIPES FOR SPRING LAKE FROM FERGUSON (FEI WATERWORKS) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,379.08

Ronnie Pollock, Director of Infrastructure and Development, was present.

The areas is in need of new culvert pipes due to continual drainage issues.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to authorize Acting County Administrator Harden to purchase culvert pipes from Ferguson (FEI Waterworks). Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR HARDEN TO PURCHASE GUARD RAILS FROM STEMBRIDGE CUSTOM METALS INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,500.00

Mr. Pollock also presented on this topic.

New guard rails are needed after an accident damaged the current rails on Newell Road. The incident has been filed with insurance. The item will be taken from Mr. Pollock's budget and reimbursed by the insurance later.

The county only received one bid from Stembridge Custom Metals Inc., as the others were unresponsive to the county's request for bid.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to authorize Acting County Administrator Harden to purchase guard rails from Stembridge Custom Metals Inc. Commissioner Crews seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

GRANTS AND SPLOST PROJECT

AGREEMENTS

1. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR HARDEN TO EXECUTE THE PHASE 1 SUPPLEMENTAL #2 AGREEMENT WITH GORDIAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$15,904.62 FOR AUTOMATIC DOOR OPENERS

The agreement is an additional scope of work added to the ongoing renovations to the annex building. The automatic door openers will allow the county to be ADA compliant and allow for wheelchair users to open the new door without difficulty.

The funding for the automatic door openers will be taken from reserves with the rest of the funds for the renovations.

Commissioner Crews motioned to authorize Acting County Administrator Harden to execute the supplemental agreement with Gordian for automatic door openers. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Benefield asked if the automatic door arms will eliminate the door rattling at the front entrance when it closes, and asked Acting County Administrator Harden to follow up on the matter.

2. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR HARDEN TO EXECUTE THE AMENDED AGREEMENT WITH THE GEO GROUP

The item will amend the current agreement with GEO and changes the administrative fees the county receives to oversee the ICE Contract.

Commissioner Gowen asked if there had been any negotiations about getting reimbursement for funds previously not received. Acting County Administrator Harden stated that County Administrator Hull had been speaking to them about the issue, but she had not been included in the conversation.

County Attorney Adams agreed the county should not move forward until discussions about the previously owed funds had come to a resolution.

Commissioner Crews motioned to table the item until the County Attorney and County Administrator could look into the issue further. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion to table the item. The motion carried unanimously.

3. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR HARDEN TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH TCP FOR EMPLOYEE TIMECLOCK AND WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The county is currently using two timeclocks. The EMS department currently uses TCP for scheduling and timeclock services.

Acting County Administrator Harden is unsure of the funding source for the item.

The software has a 16-week implementation process. If the county would like to the system to go live on January 1st, 2026, the implementation process would need to start soon.

Commissioner Crews motioned to authorize Acting County Administrator Harden to execute the agreement after she finds the funding. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion.

Commissioner Everett asked if TCP will prorate the agreement, since the county has already paid for their current services. Acting County Administrator Harden will follow up with them on the item.

County Attorney Adams stated the agreement is for 36 months, which he recommends changing to terminate and renew annually instead.

Commissioner Crews updated his motion to include the stipulation that the contract must be an annual agreement instead of 36 months. Commissioner Everett maintained his second of the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR HARDEN TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR SENIOR CENTER NUTRITION SERVICES

The agreement is the same the county negotiates every year for the senior center services annually.

Commissioner Crews motioned to authorize Acting County Administrator Harden to execute the agreement. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ORDINANCES

RESOLUTIONS

1. MOTION TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING SALLIE LOCKSON CHATMAN

Commissioner Crews motioned to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. MOTION TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A PROCEDURE FOR THE DISPOSITION OF

COUNTY-OWNED ALLEYWAYS AND UNIMPROVED ROADWAYS IN ST. GEORGE

Commissioner Crews asked County Attorney Adams for his opinion. County Attorney Adams stated the resolution looks good. There were changes made by the that erased some of the previous requirements the old procedure was following.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Crews seconded the motion.

Commissioner Gowen asked about applying this resolution to other areas in the county. County Attorney Adams explained the difference between St. George's land structure and other areas in the county.

Acting County Administrator Harden asked about the advertisement requirements. County Attorney Adams stated advertisement is not required anymore for alleyways but still is for selling larger pieces of property.

The motion carried unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. MOTION TO ADOPT THE MAY 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

Commissioner Gowen asked about the Grants and Special Projects report. The money from ICE is deposited into the account and has to be transferred to the ICE account by the county. The month of May had 12 invoices, so there was a lot of money moving in that account.

Commissioner Gowen asked if Acting County Administrator Harden had any concerns about spending in certain accounts when compared to previous years. Acting County Administrator Harden has no concerns.

The county is winding down 2014 SPLOST spending and preparing to close that account.

Commissioner Gowen motioned to adopt the financial report. Commissioner Crews seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S ACTION ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eduardo Ricardo from an Immigrant Advocacy group out of Savannah Georgia was present. Mr. Ricardo discussed his opposition to the expansion of the ICE processing facility in Folkston. Mr. Ricardo stated the facility has had multiple issues with providing adequate medical care and did not meet federal standards in 2022, claiming the facility has been cited with multiple violations. Mr. Ricardo wants the commissioners to consider denying the expansion and consider eventually closing the facility.

Orival Thompson was present in support of the commissioners. Mr. Thompson, after hearing from the other visitor, wished to share his support of the ICE facility and expressed his hopes that the commissioners continue to support it.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

County Administrator comments were heard at 6:55 PM, following the Commissioners' comments.

Acting County Administrator Harden informed the commissioners of Fire Chief Lewis and EMS Division Chief Luffman's travels to pick up the county's new ambulance.

Acting County Administrator Harden requests that the commissioners allow the office to close next Tuesday due to the auditors being present in office to finalize the 2024 audit, as both Acting County Administrator Harden and County Clerk Nettles will be with the auditors. The board agreed to allow the office closure. A notice of the closure will be posted on the county website and the office door.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Crews reported on the recreational football program. Commissioner Crews talked to the Bailey Brothers Foundation about supporting the program and has agreed to maintain contact with them about future partnerships.

Commissioner Everett talked about House Bill 223. Commissioner Gowen also discussed his understanding of the house bill.

After County Administrator Comments, Chairwoman Benefield made her comments at 6:57 pm. Chairwoman Benefield thanked Mr. Ronnie Pollock for his work on the roads and the flooding, working efficiently, and doing a great job. Chairwoman Benefield thanked Mr. Joel Shivar for his work in the recreation department. Chairwoman Benefield thanked everyone in their respective places and thanked the board members for their work.

Commissioner Gowen asked about EMS. Acting County Administrator Harden reported that she believes two trucks will be permanently stationed in St. George, two trucks will be permanently stationed in Folkston, and one "chase" truck stationed in Folkston to go wherever additional assistance may be needed. Commissioner Gowen asked to see a call log justifying the need for two ambulances to be stationed in St. George.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be July 17th, 2025, in the County Commissioners' Meeting Room at 68 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA 31537.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Everett motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Gowen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Alphya Benefield, Chairman

Madeline Nettles, County Clerk