

Minutes

Dodge County Board of Commissioners

January 17, 2012

Present: Dan McCranie, Chairman
William T. Howell Jr., Vice-Chairman, Comm. Dist. 1
Terry Niblett, Comm. Dist. 2
Brian Watkins, Comm. Dist. 3
Karen Cheek, Comm. Dist. 4

Also Present: Kelly W. Bowen, County Manager
John P. Harrington, County Attorney

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 in the Dodge County Courthouse Annex Conference Room, Suite 101.

Chairman McCranie called the meeting to order.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion, second by Brian Watkins to move the meeting to the Courtroom in the Dodge County Courthouse due to the overflow crowd. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

The meeting was reconvened in the Courtroom.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a devotional by Karen Cheek and prayer by Terry Niblett.

Elected Officials/Department Heads:

No reports by elected officials or department heads.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion, second by Terry Niblett to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2012 regular meeting as presented. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion, second by Brian Watkins to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2012 called meeting with the amendment that City Council Chairman Bobby Slye made motion to go to litigation with the Local Option Sales Tax negotiation. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Old Business:

Chairman McCranie reported that the Eastman City Council would like to meet again with the Board of Commissioners regarding the Local Option Sales Tax negotiation.

Brian Watkins made motion, second by William T. Howell, Jr. to send a letter to the City of Eastman that 27% is the County's final offer. Vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Brian Watkins made motion, second by William T. Howell, Jr. to send a letter to the Development Authority requesting that the dumpsters on their property on Airport Road be allowed to be moved to another location on that same property as requested by Dwayne Conley and that a public hearing regarding the moving of the dumpsters be on the agenda for the next commissioners meeting. Vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Although the county has received a bid from Colony Bank on the 2012 Operating Line of Credit, the bank has not given final approval to the loan at this time.

New Business:

Sheriff Jeff Hinson, Captain Tony Winborn & Bill Hallsworth from the Georgia Sheriffs Association were in attendance to discuss what it will take to open the new jail. Capt. Winborn presented a package of information to the Board that included a comparison of projected costs if the jail were to be privatized versus if the jail were to be run by the county. This information also included additional budget information as well as a list of items totaling \$50,261.25 that are still needed for the new jail.

Mr. Hallsworth discussed with the Board the liability that the county has with the current jail due to the fact that inmates cannot currently be classified. Mr. Hallsworth stated that as a locally elected state official, the Sheriff has qualified immunity as does the county. This immunity disappears if the jail is privately operated. He then stated that the staffing study that he prepared for the county is a minimal staffing recommendation and is less than the standard of 1 employee per 4 inmates.

No action was taken on the information provided.

Terry Niblett made motion, second by William T. Howell, Jr. to adopt a resolution setting the qualifying fees for the upcoming Primary Election. Vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Terry Niblett made motion, second by William T. Howell, Jr. to table the appointment of officers. Vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Two appointments are needed to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Regional Council - a municipal member to replace Ms. Faye Jessup whose term has ended and either reappointment of William T. Howell Jr. or appointment of a new member.

Brian Watkins made motion, second by Terry Niblett to reappoint William T. Howell, Jr. to the Regional Council. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

No action was taken on appointment of the municipal member as the Board is waiting to hear back from the City of Eastman.

County Manager Bowen gave an overview of the county's financial status and the pending accounts payable.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion; second by Terry Niblett to pay \$31,058.80 in payables and hold the remainder on the accounts payable list. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion; second by Brian Watkins to hold a called meeting to discuss the accounts payable once the line of credit is received. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

County Manager's Report:

Ms. Bowen presented the Revolving Loan Fund report for December 2011. There are 3 current (Howell & Sons, Heart of Georgia Metal Crafters and Dynamic Paint Solutions), 1 account not yet due (Heart of Georgia Airport Authority) and 3 accounts that are delinquent (AMD, Loyd's Quality Cars and Timberline Transport).

Karen Cheek made motion, second by Brian Watkins to obtain the airplane that was used as collateral on the Timberline Transport loan and sell it on the courthouse steps. Discussion was held on how such a sale would work. Karen Cheek made an amended motion; second by Brian Watkins to contact Mr. Randall Lewis and inform him that this would be put on the agenda at the next commissioner's meeting. Vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Ms. Bowen introduced Transwaste representative Mr. Bard Ramsey with whom she met with last week to get information related to privatizing trash pickup. Mr. Ramsey informed the Board that Transwaste currently has 12 county contracts and 26 city contracts, including the City of Eastman. He informed the Board that he could give the county prices on different options - keeping the greenbox system, manned sites, and door-to-door pickup. Mr. Ramsey said that their current contracts vary from \$9.50/month - \$17.00/month for disposal rates.

Ms. Bowen requested that she be allowed to attend the Wage-Hour & FMLA Seminar for Georgia Public Agencies in Savannah on January 26th. Terry Niblett made motion, second by Karen Cheek to approve this request. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Public Comments:

Mr. Charles Strickland addressed the Board with some suggestions based on his prior experience as the Finance Officer for Laurens County. He encouraged the Board to get involved and stick to the budget approved. He stated that the jail should be run by the Sheriff & not privatized, and that the city should pay their fair share for their inmates. He also talked about how the disposal of solid waste was handled in Laurens County.

Ms. Judy Madden reported to the Board that there had been good activity at the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012 from the Development Authority's perspective. She also reported that the Development Authority has responded to the request from Dynamic Paint Solutions regarding the Spec Building. In addition, she wanted to report that the Conference Center and the Chamber of Commerce meeting room have been utilized quite a bit since opening.

Recreation Board Chairman Ron White stated that he was given a resignation today for Recreation Director Bodie Gray and that the Recreation Board will be in the process of looking for a replacement.

Ms. Diana Glass questioned the Board regarding the boat ramp project. County Attorney Harrington explained that mistakes were made on this project and that there were new policies in place to prevent this from happening again.

Glenn Harrell asked the Board if the EMS was having difficulty answering calls because of the lack of fuel. Chairman McCranie responded that he knew of one instance where a patient needed to be transported to another hospital and the patient was taken by helicopter instead of by ambulance. Mr. Harrell again questioned the bids on the dozer, and Chairman McCranie informed him that he would be provided a copy of the information as soon as we were able to locate it.

Chuck Parkerson informed the Board that through his previous employment he had an opportunity to work in privatized prisons. He feels that those facilities are not as well taken care of nor as well run as those facilities run by counties or by the state. He also expressed his disappointment in hearing of the resignation of Recreation Director Bodie Gray. He stated that when companies look to locate in a new area, they look at the quality of the education system, the health care system and the recreation opportunities.

Samantha Kirkland, a jail officer at the Dodge County Jail, spoke to the Board regarding the unsanitary and unsafe environment at the current jail facility and that she would like to see the new jail opened.

Guylynn Hinson questioned the Board about whether the November and December bills that were being held would be charged against the 2012 budget. She was informed that these bills have already posted to the 2011 budget, but are being held due to the lack of cash on-hand. Mrs. Hinson also asked about the percentage of collections for taxes for 2010 and 2011 and outstanding property taxes for the last five years. She wanted to know if delinquent taxes were being pursued as aggressively as the Board is cutting budgets.

Executive Session:

Terry Niblett made motion, second by Brian Watkins to go into executive session for a personnel issue. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

The Board discussed the personnel matter.

Terry Niblett made motion, second by Brian Watkins to return to regular session. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Brian Watkins made motion, second by Terry Niblett to appoint William T. Howell, Jr. as Vice-Chairman. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Terry Niblett made motion, second by Brian Watkins to appoint Kelly Bowen as Assistant County Manager/County Clerk. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion, second by Terry Niblett to appoint John Harrington as County Attorney.

William T. Howell, Jr. made motion, second by Brian Watkins to accept the resignation of Linda Lowery as County Clerk and have the County Attorney prepare the necessary paperwork. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Brian Watkins made motion, second by Terry Niblett to appoint Bobby Peacock as Interim County Manager. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Adjourn:


Terry Niblett made motion, second by William T. Howell, Jr. to adjourn. Meeting was then adjourned.

Signed:



Kelly W. Bowen, County Clerk

Approved:



Dan McCranie, Chairman
Board of Commissioners