

## **Minutes**

### **Dodge County Board of Commissioners**

**October 1, 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:** John Harrington, County Attorney  
Bobby Peacock, County Manager  
Nancy Gail Rogers, County Clerk

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 1, 2012, in Suite 101 of the Dodge County Courthouse Annex.

Chairman Dan McCranie called the meeting to order and stated a change to the agenda was needed. Commissioner Terry Niblett made a motion to add Item F: Lost Proposal to the Old Business. Commissioner William Howell seconded the motion, vote was unanimous and motion carried. Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a devotional by Commissioner Karen Cheek entitled the Secret of Prosperity from the 1932 book "God Calling." Commissioner Brian Watkins led the group in prayer.

#### **Elected Officials & Department Heads:**

A. Judge H. Frederick Mullis, Jr.

Judge Mullis spoke to the Commissioners regarding a study that had been conducted within the Oconee Judicial Circuit. Currently there are two judges in the six counties served by the circuit. There are five prisons located in the Oconee Judicial Circuit that house thirteen percent (13%) of all Georgia prisoners and 162 habeas corpus cases pending. The study concluded that a third judgeship is warranted and the legislature would address the need and contact the counties involved for their support. Dodge County's per capita portion for a third judge would be an increase of approximately \$18,000 per year. Judge Mullis said a letter with detailed information on the study and recommendations to the commissioners would be forthcoming.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Commissioner Terry Niblett made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2012, regular meeting as presented. Commissioner William Howell seconded the motion, vote was unanimous and the minutes were approved.

### **Old Business:**

#### A. Bids-Dumpster & Waste Disposal

There was discussion from the commissioners about the income generated from the commercial dumpsters supplied to businesses in the city and also the annual depreciation of the county owned equipment. There was no motion made.

#### B. EMA Mass Alert System Update

County Attorney John Harrington stated he had talked with the company about the addition of an opt in clause to the contract offered and they said the contract cannot be modified and consider it to be a three year deal. Commissioner Brian Watkins asked if the same service was available with most cell phones now and Stanley Stephens said this system offered Code Red Emergency warning in addition to the weather warning system.

#### C. EEO/Personnel Policy Update

County Attorney John Harrington passed out copies of the Personnel Policies of Dodge County. Commissioner Terry Niblett made a motion to table the matter and allow time for further review. Commissioner Karen Cheek seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

#### D. Public Address/ Sound System

Commissioner Karen Cheek asked County Manager Bobby Peacock the balance of the contingency fund and he replied zero. She then made a motion to purchase the public address sound system from BFE Technologies with funds from the Line of Credit. The motion died for lack of a second.

#### E. Codifying County Ordinances Update

County Attorney John Harrington said he would contact Judge Mullis for an update on using funds from the County Law Library Fund for this purpose.

#### F. LOST Proposal

Commissioner Terry Niblett made a motion for all small cities and county portion of the Local Option Sales Tax to be kept at the same percentages of the previous agreement. The motion was seconded by William Howell, Jr. Commissioner Watkins asked didn't the commissioner's propose to increase the cities of Chauncey and Chester due to increases in population.

Commissioner Cheek agreed the cities were told they would keep the percentages at the proposed rates of:

- City of Chauncey 2.57%
- City of Chester 7.60%
- City of Milan 3.38%
- City of Rhine 2.82%
- City of Eastman 31.14%
- Dodge County (unincorporated areas) 52.49%

For clarification Commissioner Niblett restated the amounts of his motion were as follows:

- Dodge County (unincorporated areas) 54.30%
- City of Chauncey 1.88%
- City of Chester 6.48%
- City of Eastman 31.14%
- City of Milan 3.38%
- City of Rhine 2.82%

Commissioner Watkins asked the overall effect on the budget if the percentages were increased and Commissioner Niblett responded his calculations showed a difference of \$70,000. Vote was as follows: Commissioners Niblett and Howell voted in favor of motion with Commissioners Watkins and Cheek voting no to the motion. Chairman McCranie voted no to the motion and motion failed. City Councilman Raymond Mullis presented a Certificate of Distribution form to Chairman McCranie for his signature stating a modification of the percentage for the City of Eastman. County Attorney Harrington advised a second motion for the proposed rates was not necessary since it was approved in previous negotiations.

**New Business:**

**A. Approval of Accounts Payable**

Commissioner Karen Cheek questioned check number 10967 to Dodge County Hospital for EMS Rent and Supplies. County Manager Peacock answered that to satisfy a legal issue the hospital charged \$1 per year rent for the EMS. A motion was made by Commissioner Howell to approve the accounts payable list. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Niblett, vote was unanimous and motion carried.

**B. New Jail Supplies**

A bid list was submitted by Tony Winborn of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office showing a low bid from the Department of Corrections for bedding and supplies for the new jail at \$50,621.25. Commissioner Karen Cheek made a motion to proceed with the purchase of the supplies using funds from the Colony Bank line of credit. Commissioner Watkins asked if the present bid would

be honored or if new bids would have to be taken. Sheriff Jeff Hinson replied that he could call and ask if the bids were still good. Commissioner Terry Niblett seconded the motion to authorize purchase of the supplies. Vote was unanimous and motion carried.

#### C. Inventory on County Property

County Manager Bobby Peacock stated the county property inventory was in progress but not yet complete. He expected all departments to have inventory lists submitted soon.

#### D. Business Personal Property Contract

Contract for Board of Assessors with Taylor Business Services, Inc. budgeted last year at a cost of \$20,000 with a cost this year of \$15,000. Questions arose as to why there was need for approval if it was within the budget of the Tax Assessors. Chairman McCranie made a motion to table the matter. Commissioner Cheek seconded the motion, vote was unanimous and matter was tabled. County Attorney Harrington stated that the Tax Assessor process must be independent of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Watkins asked him to look into the matter for clarification.

#### E. Fred Wilson

It was determined that Mr. Wilson was not present. County Manager Peacock said he had inquired about a waiver of penalty and interest on county property tax and had been referred to the board.

### **County Manager Report:**

County Manager Bobby Peacock presented a request for a waiver of property tax from the Dodge Baptist Association on property granted to the Association from Bertie Mae Garrett. Taxes are due of \$1,054 with Mrs. Garrett's family agreeing to pay a pro rata share of \$312 and the Dodge Baptist Association requesting a waiver of the balance. County Attorney Harrington advised the board that they cannot change the character of property in the middle of a tax year that they can only waive penalties, fines and assessments and this was a request for a waiver of the actual tax. He said the Board of Assessors could change the tax exempt status as of January 1, 2013.

Commissioner Watkins asked Peacock if he had looked into the rumors that county road personnel were working on private property. County Manager Peacock replied that he had and he had found no factual evidence to support the accusations. Commissioner Watkins asked those in attendance to supply details of any work being done on private property to the board and he could assure them it would be corrected if found to be true.

Commissioner Karen Cheek asked Peacock if the right of way on Orphan Cemetery Road had been mowed. He replied yes. She then asked if the inventory in progress on county property would include tools and parts. He replied that the inventory was just on large equipment of each department.

Commissioner Terry Niblett stated that the sample ballot for Dodge County would be available for viewing on the website [www.dodgecountyga.com](http://www.dodgecountyga.com). The cost to publish the sample ballot in the Dodge County News would be \$237.50 and he made a motion to do so. Commissioner Karen Cheek seconded his motion, vote was unanimous and motion carried.

### **Public Comments:**

Kenneth Williamson made comments about the weather alert system and asked if the county was prepared to handle a bomb threat. Sheriff Jeff Hinson replied that the Dodge County Sheriff Office had an agreement with the Laurens County EOD squad and also the Warner Robins Air Force Base and either could be on the scene within 30 to 45 minutes.

Susan Coffee stated that when a tornado went through Greenwood Heights there was no warning at 1:00 a.m. She said she has licensed facilities for 15 – 24 people and thought the warning system would be a benefit to schools, nursing homes, and hospitals for the cost of approximately \$1 per person per year.

Glenn Harrell asked if the grinder had been installed at the new jail and County Manager Bobby Peacock replied installation was complete. He asked about supplies and training for the new facility.

Diana Glass asked who set the property tax due date of December 1, 2012. Chairman McCranie replied the Board of Commissioners. She asked when and Cindy Eckles replied it was in the Dodge County News. Mrs. Glass asked about the layoff at the Road Department and if any more layoffs were planned. Bobby Peacock replied that there had been one layoff of an employee who was hired to mow grass and all mowing had ceased.

Commissioner Karen Cheek asked Sheriff Jeff Hinson about the time frame to train employees for the new jail. He answered the training consisted of two weeks of school and two weeks of familiarization. He said the Sheriff's Association would train locally but wasn't sure about the scheduling.

**Adjourn:**

Commissioner William Howell made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Terry Niblett seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned.

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Nancy Gail Rogers  
County Clerk

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Dan McCranie  
Chairman