

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

April 29, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on April 29, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, County Clerk Jawahn Ware, and other staff. The public and representatives of the media participated in person and via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the April 1st Regular Meeting, April 8th Work Session, and April 8th Special Called Meeting.

The Chairman recognized Chief Executive Officer of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Albany, Jacqueline Robinson, to introduce herself to the Board. Before leaving Albany, Ms. Robinson served as the Chief Operating Officer under Director Marvin Laster. She is the 1st female CEO in the local organization's history. Questions were answered for the Board and kudos were provided alongside welcoming her back to Albany.

The Chairman recognized Clennon L. King, Cultural Projects Consultant, AugustineMonica Films, to inform the Commission of the historic and cultural significance of events and individuals from Albany, GA, and request the Commission establish a Dougherty County Black Heritage Trail, to include the commissioning of the design and erecting of historic markers to underscore the region's cultural value and enhance it as a tourist destination. After presenting an interactive video to the Board, he shared that he was requesting to first create a virtual tour, then a physical 20-stop tour, and place an artistic marker (for example: statue) at the Courthouse. The presentation was welcomed because one of the Board's goals was tourism. Commissioner Jones shared that this was an opportunity for collaboration with the Historic Preservation Commission, Artesian Alliance, Welcome Center and others. Commissioners Gray and Newsome suggested that the Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) be included because they have already started [a project] on the federal level and have funding available and Mr. King's expertise would be needed. Commissioner Edwards asked that our County Administrator initiate a meeting between all parties, but Mr. King was reluctant to partner. The Chairman said that he would like for the County to remain involved and there will be an initial meeting spearheaded by our Board that will involve all Commissioners, staff, and other stakeholders.

The Chairman recognized Angelia Jones, Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee, who shared that she agreed with Mr. King's presentation. She mentioned how the Welcome Center and Executive Director of the Albany Convention and Visitors Bureau Rashelle Minix attempted to present this request approximately 10 years ago but there was no interest. She stressed collaboration for the project.

The Chairman called for the zoning discussion of JFT Public Properties LP, Mark Taylor, applicant and owner (24-015) request to rezone a 20.37-acre undeveloped parcel from C-3c (Commercial Business District, Conditional) to C-R (Community Residential Multiple Dwelling District). The rezoning would allow the development of a townhouse subdivision. The property is on a South Mock Road parcel. The Planning Commission's public hearing will be May 2, 2024 and a recommendation will be provided. Planning & Development Services Director, Paul Forgey, addressed. The Board of Commissioner's Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the May 6, 2024 Regular Meeting. Mr. Forgey shared that this was odd that the Planning Commission will meet after the Board of Commissioners. However, the process is not impacted because the consideration was introduced. The Planning Commission's vote was just not available today. Commissioner Gray wanted to ensure that no discussion would influence the Planning Commission's consideration. Mr. Forgey shared that he could address any questions from the staff report.

The Chairman called for the zoning discussion of Tommy Crosby, applicant and owner (24-021) request to rezone a 3.69-acre from AG (Agricultural District) and C-2 (General Mixed-Use Business District) to C-3 (Commercial District). The rezoning would allow for the operation of a manufactured home sales and repair business. The property address is 1932 Liberty Expressway. The Planning Commission's public hearing will be May 2, 2024 and a recommendation will be provided. Planning & Development Services Director, Paul Forgey, addressed. The Board of Commissioner's Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the May 6, 2024 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Edwards said that work had commenced, and Mr. Forgey shared he would investigate because no work should have started.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from the Dougherty County Sheriff's Office to purchase one 2024 Ford F150 Police Responder 4X4 in the amount \$55,095 from State Contract vendor, Wade Ford (Smyrna, Ga). Funding is available in SPLOST VIII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Major Ken Faust were present.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from Facilities Management to purchase one 2023 Ford F350 Super Duty Service Truck in the amount \$75,414 from State Contract vendor, Wade Ford (Smyrna, Ga). Funding is available in SPLOST VIII. The truck is upfitted with a service body and is available for delivery. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey were present.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from Facilities Management to accept the quotes to replace the Air Handling Unit (AHU) #9 and controls at the Dougherty County Health Department for a total expenditure of \$130,917.20. Service Pro's (Leesburg, Ga) is the lowest quoted vendor to replace the AHU in the amount of \$62,317.20. Sole source vendor, ESS (Albany, Ga) will replace the controls in the amount of \$68,600. Funding is budgeted in SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey were present.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from Facilities Management to accept the quote to paint the hallways on the first floor of the Central Square Building from the lowest quoted vendor

MSK, LLC (Leesburg, Ga) in the amount of \$27,950. Funding is budgeted in SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey was present.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to accept the Work Based Learning Program Agreement between Dougherty County and Turner Job Corps (TJC) Center. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, HR Director Erica Potts and TJC Director Nathaniel Cooper were present. Mr. Brooks shared that the County Administration was working with the center.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from the Retirement Fund Committee to accept Amendment Number Two to the Dougherty County Defined Benefit Retirement Plan and Trust. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, HR Director Erica Potts, and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Benefits Law Group Attorney Terri Taylor was present via teleconference. It was noted that the 401(a) qualifications do not qualify for the defined benefit plan. Mr. Brooks shared that it impacted the senior management team and there will be one choice at the time of hire. The change will only impact Mr. Brooks and future [external] senior management hires. Commissioner Newsome shared that this request “cleans up” an action taken earlier that the benefits attorney deemed should not have been done. Commissioner Newsome further noted that this allowed Dougherty County to attract additional personnel based on better benefits. Mr. Brooks will provide financial impact numbers for Commissioner Gaines but shared that it would be a miniscule impact because there were still over 600 participants in the plan. If a senior management employee opted to not participate in the defined benefit plan, there would not be a 3% contribution.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from the Retirement Fund Committee to change Dougherty County’s current Retirement Life Insurance (Death Benefit) from Lincoln Financial to Securian. HUB International representatives, FSA Glen Gahan and Senior Strategic Account Executive Christi Speck addressed. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and HR Director Erica Potts were present. Ms. Speck provided an overview of the RFP process.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to ratify the application to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grant Program and accept the award in the amount of \$40,485. There is a local fund share amount of \$2,429.10 required. The grant will be used to update the Dougherty County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan to meet the federal requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The local funding requirements will be offset by volunteer time. EMA Director Chief Cedric Scott and Consultant, Disaster Recovery & Grant Programs, Georgia Collier-Bolling addressed. Ms. Collier-Bolling provided an overview and shared that it was time for our plan to be updated. Chief Scott clarified that the use was for consultant fees [to prepare the plan]. It was noted that the consultant fee was approximate and may be lowered. If so, the County’s maximum match is 6% and the maximum grant amount is \$40,485. Mr. Brooks clarified that the County labor could be considered in-kind.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to transfer property at 2419 Sylvester Highway to the Albany Dougherty Land Bank. County Attorney Alex Shalishali and Planning & Development Services Director, Paul Forgey addressed. The Land Bank would receive a 10% administrative fee and Commissioner Edwards inquired about doing the same [in regard to transferring land] for

the Fire Department on Mock Road. Mr. Brooks shared that he believed the building was now under new ownership of the City of Albany.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to work with the Artesian Alliance to demo the current Festival Springs Fountain for the drafting and construction of plans that will replace the current splashpad. Dougherty County will work in partnership with the Artesian Alliance for Phase I. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey addressed. Artesian Alliance Executive Director Tommy Gregors was present to share the Flint River Quarium Master Plan and the redevelopment of River Front Park. Mr. Brooks provided an overview of the 1st phase which would include an interactive water feature for the public. Ms. Hailey shared that the current fountain was failing, and Mr. Gregors was willing to work with the Board to mitigate costs for Chehaw during construction.

The Chairman called for the recommendation of the proposed board appointments. County Clerk Jawahn Ware addressed. Mrs. Ware asked the Board to please see the information presented in the packet.

Albany-Dougherty Land Bank Authority- There is one County appointment with a two-year term ending July 31, 2026. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks recommended the reappointment of incumbent Jim McBride. The bylaws require a recommendation to be provided from the listing of applicants.

ASPIRE Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Services Board- There is one appointment with a three-year term ending June 30, 2027. Incumbent Dr. Eugene Sherman desires reappointment. There are two new applicants: Nathaniel Cooper III and Commissioner Clinton Johnson.

Citizens Transportation Committee – There is one appointment with a three-year unexpired term ending December 31, 2025. There are no new applicants. There is one vacancy.

Department of Family & Children Services – There are two appointments with a five-year term ending June 30, 2029. Incumbents Henry Mathis, Jr. and Barbara Johnson Clark desire reappointment. There are three new applicants: Nathaniel Cooper III, Christy Faison, and Martez Favis.

Electrical Board – There are four appointments: one County appointment for a Master Electrician, one joint appointment for an Electrical Supplier, one joint appointment for a Professional Engineer and one appointment for a joint citizen member, all with a one-year term ending December 31, 2024. There are no new applicants. All joint appointments must be ratified by the City of Albany. There are four vacancies.

Fire Code Board of Appeals – There are three appointments with a three-year unexpired term ending December 31, 2025. There are no new applicants. There are three vacancies.

Flood Plain Management Review Board – There is one County appointment with a three-year unexpired term ending December 31, 2024. There are no new applicants. There is one vacancy.

Gas Board – There is one County appointment with a one-year term ending December 31, 2024. There are no new applicants. All joint appointments must be ratified by the City of Albany. There is one vacancy.

Planning Commission – There is one County appointment with a three-year unexpired term ending December 31, 2025. Incumbent Billy Merrit is no longer able to serve. There are two new applicants: Casey Beane and Demetrius Love. There is one vacancy.

Mr. Brooks shared that notices went to the public regarding revaluation, and it was a state requirement for the County to have a total revaluation. He also mentioned that a Governmental Affairs Meeting was being scheduled to review the vegetation and timber harvest ordinances. Attorney Shalishali provided the broad authority given to the Development Authority and noted the limitations of them only being able to issue revenue bonds. They cannot issue any bonds that would bind the Board. The Development Authority cannot operate the project but can only provide financing. Our authority has been inactive for many years, but we do have other active authorities [with similar capabilities]. It was also shared that the Payroll Development Authority (PDA) does have a significant overlap [in function] but the difference is who appoints the members. Mr. Brooks would like staff to have the Development Authority reactivated with special goals. Commissioner Gray shared that PDA was very viable and could be used. Commissioner Edwards inquired about the County picnic and Commissioner Johnson inquired about alley paving. Mr. Brooks provided an update that the funding for the alley paving was matched with the TSPLOST interest. It was noted that use of interest was designed to cover any shortfalls. Commissioner Johnson also said that he met a vendor at the ACCG conference and would like him to present information. Commissioner Gaines recognized Chairman Heard for completing the ACCG Core Certification, Commissioner Jones for completing Quality Life/Social Issues Specialty Certification, Commissioner Newsome for completing Public Safety Specialty Certification and Commissioner Johnson was recognized as the incoming 1st Vice President. PIO Phyllis Banks was thanked for her hard work, especially with her effectiveness on social media. Commissioner Jones inquired about our current code not having replacement [of damage by large trucks] for our roads. Chairman Heard said that this was Dougherty County Spirit Week and citizens would see staff dressed more creatively. Individuals who were dressed for mismatch day were recognized (in the meeting earlier).

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK