

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

June 10, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on June 10, 2024. Community Advocate Geraldine West Hudley sang a song by Ella Baker in support of the County's upcoming Juneteenth Community Celebration. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were Acting 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 May 20th Regular Meeting.

The Chairman recognized Public Information Officer Phyllis Banks to update the Commission on the 2024 Juneteenth Event. A video was shown and an interview with Daniella Patterson with the Thornateska revealed a connection to events in 1865 revealing a poem written by Karen Bowen relative to Juneteenth. PIO Banks provided treats and informed the Board of the significance of the colors. Accolades were given and the Commissioners made suggestions for future events to include dates, times, local vendor participation, and a Commissioner sitting on the planning committee. She did clarify the use of several new local vendors. Mr. Brooks shared that the Commission could consider an item pertaining to governance to discuss which additional committees they would like a Commissioner or citizens to participate in. Ms. Banks shared the positive collaboration experience she has had with the City of Albany.

The Chairman called for zoning consideration for Dave Patel, applicant, and C. W. Geer, Jr., owner, (24-027) request to rezone a 2.83-acre parcel from C-1 (Neighborhood Mixed-Use Business District) to C-2 (General Mixed-Use Business District). The rezoning would allow the development of a commercial development. The property is on 1542 South Mock Road parcel. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Deputy Planning Director addressed. The Public Hearing and Action on this item are scheduled for the June 17, 2024 Regular Meeting. The desire was for commercial retail space.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the contract from Flint River Consulting (Albany, GA) to survey and perform a subsurface investigation for Phase I of the Dougherty County Stabilization Project on Gillionville Road in the amount of \$35,100. Funding is available in SPLOST VI. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, Public Works Director Chuck Mathis, and Engineering Manager, Jeremy Brown addressed. Mr. Brown clarified that this was a professional service with an existing relationship with the vendor. He answered questions from Commissioner Johnson regarding TSPLOST funding use and Phase 2.

The Chairman called for the recommendation from Keep Albany Dougherty Beautiful (KADB) to apply for a GA Environmental Protection Division Scrap Tire Abatement Reimbursement (STAR) Grant in the amount of \$75,000. The grant will be used for abatement, disposal, and the scrapping of used tires discarded at illegal dumping sites all over the City and County to aid in keeping our community clean and livable. This is a reimbursable grant with no local match. KADB Executive Director Jwana Washington and CDBG-DR & Grants Program Manager Harriet Hollis addressed. Ms. Hollis shared that this was a reimbursable grant, but no money was to be expended by the County. They explained how the funding process by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) was being handled. The Commission shared comments and potential concerns were addressed. **The consensus concern and request were to have multiple collection sites.** The Chairman asked the ladies to please research the suggestions and partnerships that could make the program more effective and attractive for citizens.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to approve the alcohol application from Mahadev Cordele, Inc., Alpeshkumar A. Patel licensee, dba Stop N Shot, at 700 Cordele Road for Package-Beer and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal's Office recommended approval. Chief Deputy Anthony Donaldson, Code Enforcement Department, addressed. Chief Donaldson shared that this was a transfer of ownership and clarified that this was in District 6.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the nomination for County Clerk Jawahn Ware to serve as the Commission's Voting Delegate at the NACO Business Session on July 15, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard addressed. The Chairman shared that Commissioner Jones use to attend but could not do so and asked for support of the Clerk Ware.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept the Task Order from Atlantic Coast Consulting to proceed with professional services to Solid Waste for the modifications of the Horizontal and Vertical Expansion of the Dougherty County Fleming/Gaissert Road Municipal Solid Waste Landfill. The total contract amount for the Task Order shall not exceed \$225,000. Atlantic Coast Consulting is the County's current consultant company. Funding is budgeted in the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks and Solid Waste Interim Director Melvin Williams addressed. Consultant, David Hamilton, Atlantic Coast Consulting, was present. Mr. Brooks shared that this was the topic that we had discussion on in the Finance Committee Meeting and there was no additional discussion held.

The Chairman called for the presentation and review of the proposed update to the Vegetation Ordinance based on recommendations by the Governmental Affairs Committee and input by consultant Molly Esswein with Jarrard & Davis, LLC. Committee Chairwoman Gloria Gaines, Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Molly Esswein was available via teleconference. Commissioner Gaines shared that there were on the ground real problems, that the Commissioners were trying to address. She thanked all for their participation and believed the documents were in good voting order. Attorney Shalishali mentioned the historical concern that was presented by Commissioner Edwards. Some specific revisions to the policy were noted and Commissioner Gray clarified his request for the \$25 citation fee. Commissioner Gaines and others shared that we want to keep our areas clean but should be consistent across the Board with fees. Commissioner Edwards requested that the request not be held for the potential fee.

The Chairman called for the presentation and review of the proposed update to the Timber Harvesting Ordinance based on recommendations by the Governmental Affairs Committee and input by Molly Esswein with Jarrard & Davis, LLC. Committee Chairwoman Gloria Gaines, Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, and County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Commissioner Gaines provided additional sentiments and Attorney Shalishali shared that the PIO provided concerns and he thanked Ms. Esswein. He mentioned key aspects of the model ordinance and Ms. Esswein was available via teleconference to respond to questions from the Board.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to establish a Tenant Based Task Force to assist in the Development of a Master Plan for the Dougherty County Judicial Building. The Dougherty County Judicial Building needs a comprehensive, cost-effective, and operationally efficient Master Plan. Approval is requested to obtain the necessary authority to create a “Judicial Building Task Force” to work with the architectural firm of SRJ Architects, Inc. to develop the comprehensive plan. Funding to support this developing plan will follow for Board approval in FY 2025. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey, and Architect, Mike Johnson, SRJ Architects addressed. Superior Court Judges Joseph Dent and Denise Marshall were present. Mr. Brooks said that the needs for the Judicial Building have been shared with the Board. There were many tenants in the building, and we needed to be sensitive to everyone’s needs. In addition, it was noted that this was why the Task Force Committee was a significant need. Architect Johnson was very familiar with the building and Ms. Hailey said that there had not been enough money to redesign the space. The building was built in the 60’s and was not used as the initial design. It was planned for this to be a phased approach to include evaluation of other sites. Commissioner Newsome asked to be the Board’s representative on the Task Force. Mr. Brooks shared that the estimated cost for the Master Plan and services that need to be broken out was a little under \$400,000. He clarified for Commissioner Gaines that a budget had not been approved. This request was to establish a Task Force that has a minimal cost associated with its creation. Upon the comment by Commissioner Jones, the Chairman clarified that the building belonged to the County, and he has a strong interest in ensuring that the Municipal Court will return to the Judicial Building. It was noted that the City of Albany and other tenants pay [rent]. Judge Dent provided updates on the upgrades and progression made noting that the second system was updated at no cost to the County based on a grant received. He also requested to be on the Task Force and Judge Marshall thanked the Board for their support.

The Chairman called for the recommendation to accept Option B for the improvement of access points from the County Right-of-Way joining the Cul-de-Sac of Shady Glen Lane in the amount of \$4,120 as recommended by the Public Works Committee. Funding is available from TSPLOST. The purchase is within the Administrator's authority but discussion amongst the full Board was requested. Public Works Committee Chairman Ed Newsome and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Mr. Brooks shared that there was a request for the Board to review other options not selected by the Committee. Commissioner Newsome said that the staff recommendation was supported and Chairman Heard shared that the item will be presented next week.

The Chairman called for the presentation and review of the proposed FY 2025 Budgets as recommended by the Finance Committee. Finance Committee Chairman Clinton Johnson, Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, and Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld addressed.

Commissioner Johnson thanked the Finance members, Board members and staff for working on a good presentation. Mr. Brooks provided comments and turned the presentation over to Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld. She shared that our amended FY24 budget was \$92,108,421 and the proposed FY25 budget is \$98,911, 413 which was a 7.4% increase. In regard to the FY 24 year-end projections, the beginning fund balance was \$26,414,352, unaudited with estimated revenues through 6/30/2024 of \$63,225,000 and to date estimated expenditures of \$62,000,000. There was a projected average of \$1,225,000 received, but it was noted that all expenditures have not been received giving an estimated fund balance for 6/30/2024 of \$27, 639, 352. Ms. Westenfeld reminded the Board that in FY23 over \$9 million in ARPA funds were received that we did not have in future years. The Capital Improvement Program was discussed. The proposed FY25 CIP Fund Balance is \$1,231,702 with planned expenditures of \$388,456. In regard to the Special Services District, the unaudited beginning balance was \$9,745,054 as of 7/1/2023 with estimated revenue through 6/30/2024 of \$8,966,591, estimated expenditures of \$8,455,010 providing a project ending net position at 6/30/2024 of \$10,256,635. It was noted that the proposed FY25 budget is \$10,453,726. For the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, as of 7/1/2023, the unaudited beginning balance was \$28,440,443 with estimated revenues through 6/30/2024 of \$5,556,000 with estimated expenditures of \$4,363,874 providing an overage of \$1,192,126 for an estimated net position of \$29,632,569 as of 06/30/2024. The proposed FY25 budget is \$4,451,760 and the proposed Capital Outlay expenditures are \$3,407,500. Commissioner Johnson shared that there were still pending approvals of a CPI for tipping fees which may change the numbers. He also said that most of the specific questions posed by Commissioner Gaines would be addressed by our consultant, Davenport. Mr. Brooks shared most of the answers are usually provided during the millage rate presentation. However, information will be sought before approval.

Mr. Brooks reminded the Board that the Governmental Affairs Committee will meet at 1 p.m. today in Room 120. He also shared that the Clerks were working to schedule a Recreation Committee Meeting. It was expected that the FY23 audit will be provided before the June 15th deadline. There have been fatal accidents at this intersection and based on a traffic study done by Worth County, they presented the request to Commissioner Jones. Dougherty County would fund the \$40,000 project and be reimbursed with 50 % by Worth County. This was under the purview of Mr. Brook's authority and the cost but wanted to update the Board on the discussion with Commissioner Jones. There were no objections to proceeding with the correction or place on the agenda. Commissioner Jones added insight on the correct action and thanked Public Works for their support. Mr. Brooks confirmed for Commissioner Johnson that this was TSPLOST eligible. Upon a question by Commissioner Edwards, Mr. Brooks shared that having a policy was always good for reference. Commissioner Edwards said that there was no current policy and Mr. Brooks shared that there was an engineering study that supported the need. Commissioner Gray left at 12:02 p.m. The Board thanked Ms. Hudley for being present in addition to former Chief Eugene Anderson. Commissioner Johnson thanked Interim Finance Director Amy Westenfeld and Interim Assistant Finance Director Kim Woods for doing well on their first presentation. He stressed that the Board always wanted to hear the needs of the department managers. Commissioner Johnson requested that work with Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA) needed to be done and not be held up for the Albany Dougherty Land Bank. Commissioner Gaines highlighted the conference that the City of Albany Commissioner Jon Howard had on poverty. She thanked Mr. Brooks for the work being done to address a concern

in her district. Commissioner Jones recognized Attorney Shalishali for his 2 years of service to the County. The Chairman commended Ms. Sherrell Byrd and SOWEGA Rising for their event pertaining to Gun Violence and asked that a moment of silence be given to Dr. Eugene Sherman who recently passed to reflect on his life.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK