

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

July 18, 2022

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on July 18, 2022. Chairman Christopher Cohilas presided and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Administrator Michael McCoy, 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. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison and County Attorney Spencer Lee were absent.

After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, the Chairman called for approval of the minutes of the June 27th Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Newsome, the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Chairman opened the SPLOST VIII public hearing and Mr. William Wright spoke about his concerns. There being no additional comments regarding the proposed matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

The Chairman introduced the new County Attorney Alex Shalishali.

The Chairman recognized Ms. Lou Ester Milledge Hardy to accept the proclamation recognizing her achievements in Dougherty County. Mr. George Andrews, founder of Capitol City Bank was recognized by Commissioner Gaines. The proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS: Lou Easter Milledge-Hardy, was born on June 17, 1956, to Rufus and Louise Milledge in Lee County, Georgia; the eleventh of eighteen children. She graduated from Lee County High School in May 1975 and attended Darton College, Meadows Business College, and Albany State University. She graduated from Troy University College with a major in Business Administration; and

WHEREAS: Mrs. Hardy was blessed with two children, Courtney Kintrell Hardy, Sr., and Alicia Shaunte' Hardy-Drake; a son-in-law Cornelius Drake, and four grandchildren; Mia Hardy, Courtney Kintrell Hardy, Jr., Maliyah Hardy; and Caleb Lazar Drake; and

WHEREAS: Mrs. Hardy is a retired banker of thirty-two years, the first black female Branch Manager of an Afro-American Bank, Capitol City Bank of Albany, Georgia; and is currently employed with Dougherty County School System, where she has served as a Parent Facilitator for the past four years; and

WHEREAS: A member of First Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, she serves as a Sanctuary Choir Ministry President; member of the Praise Team; Announcer/ Welcome Ministry; President of Women’s Devotion Ministry; and Pastor’s Aide Ministry; and

WHEREAS: Awards Mrs. Hardy has received include Top Sales award and Customer’s Excellence Award (Bank of America) ; PTO and Employee Award (DCSS-Southside Middle School); Honorary Award (Another Tut’s Production of Atlanta Georgia); recognized in 2017 by Trademark Women of Distinction; participated in the Mrs. Georgia Pageant in 1986 and chosen as Mrs. Congeniality in 2006; crowned Mrs. Dougherty County in 2007 and was chosen again as Mrs. Congeniality in the Mrs. Georgia Pageant the same year. In 2019, Mrs. Hardy was the 3rd place runner-up in the Ms. Senior Georgia Pageant, receiving the Sales Award. May 2021, Mrs. Hardy was the 1st runner-up in the Ms. Southwest Georgia Senior Pageant and was crowned in that pageant on September 18, 2021, as Ms. Southwest Georgia Senior. In December 2021, Mrs. Hardy received DCSS’s FACE Rock Star Award; and

WHEREAS: Mrs. Hardy serves on the Albany Community Together Board, Albany Civil Rights Institute, and Miss Albany. She served as a Judge for Albany State University Pageant 2022, a Judge for Juneteenth Pageant June 18, 2022, and was a nominee for the Albany Herald Women of the Year of Award. She is also a model for Another Tut’s Production; and

WHEREAS: Dougherty County Commission, the Milledge Hardy and Drake families, Rev. Gary C. Sanders, Sr., the family of First Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church will be honoring Lou Easter Milledge-Hardy as their “2022 Living Legend”, and recognizing her for being an exemplary servant of her Family, Church Family and the Community of Albany, Georgia; NOW

THEREFORE: We, the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County, Georgia, do hereby proclaim July 18, 2022 as Lou Easter Milledge Hardy Day in the County of Albany, Georgia, and urge the Milledge, Hardy and the Drake families, and the congregation of First Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church to join me in honoring her achievements. I further urge her extended family and friends to join in the celebration to pay homage to Mrs. Hardy and wish her continued success in her future endeavors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the County of Dougherty to be affixed.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

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Christopher S. Cohilas, Chairman

The Chairman recognized Consultant Ed Wall to provide a multi-year financial projection update to the Board. Mr. Wall corrected information received from the public to note that Dougherty County spends \$800 per capita and not \$8,800 as presented. A comparison of Lee, Valdosta-

Lowndes, Bartow, Macon-Bibb, Bulloch and Tift counties were provided. His presentation was noted as “apples to apples” comparing similar services. He concluded from the question of Commissioner Gaines that the concern is the value of the digest. He also said that it needed to grow by focusing on economic development. He presented assumptions forecasted due to inflation, pay study implementation and a potential increase in property taxes. He stated that if no pay study is implemented, a millage rate is still needed to prevent the County’s reserves from being lower than the County’s standards. The millage rate effect on a \$100,000 home was provided and numbers did not reflect the homestead exemptions. A 2.5 mil increase would cause an \$8 monthly impact (\$100 annual), 4 mils impact is \$13 (\$160 annual) and 4.5 mils is \$15 (\$180 annual). He shared that his last forecast was that the previous rate increase would last under five years. Commissioner Johnson asked what is being done to address the County’s issue. After a lengthy discussion ensued, Mr. Wall will work with Mr. McCoy and Mrs. Hendley to provide additional suggestions requested by the Board. Mr. Wall did share that every County that he works with must increase their millage rate this year primarily due to higher wages. The Chairman said that it appears that there is no choice, and an increase is coming but options will be explored. Mr. Wall did clarify for Commissioner Gaines that if a millage increase is not done, then reserves would have to be used. Chairman Cohilas concluded that Mr. Wall work with the Finance Committee relative to today’s discussion to consider reassessment of the tax digest, and within 60-90 days provide the pros and cons of creating a special tax district and asked for a report with recommendations be provided before setting the millage rate.

The Chairman opened the public hearing for Ronnie Gay & Charlotte A. Gay; owner and applicant (22-037) request to rezone 4.195 acres from R-2 (Single Family Residential District) to C-8 (Commercial Recreation District). The proposed use is for Recreational Vehicle Park. The property is located at 3420 Sylvester Road. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Angel Gray, Planning Manager, addressed. Mr. Gay was present but yielded the request to speak. There being no additional comments regarding the proposed matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

The Chairman called for consideration to purchase three 2022 Police Interceptor SUVs for the Albany Dougherty Drug Unit (ADDU) from sole bidder Wade Ford (Smyrna, GA) for a total expenditure of \$103,627.02. Funding is budgeted the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). City of Albany Buyer Corey Gamble and ADDU Major Ryan Ward were present.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Jones, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration to purchase one 2022 F-150 for Solid Waste from the State Contract Vendor Wade Ford (Smyrna, GA) in the amount of \$38,942.68. The vehicle is available for delivery. Funding is available in the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. County Administrator Michael McCoy will address. City of Albany Buyer Corey Gamble and Solid Waste Director Campbell Smith are present.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. Under discussion, Mr. McCoy clarified that this will be replacing the vehicle that caught on fire.

Mr. Smith shared that there were issues with the previous vehicle's make and model. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration to purchase two 2022 F-150 for Public Works from the State Contract Vendor Wade Ford (Smyrna, GA) for the total expenditure of \$60,934. The vehicles are available for delivery. Funding is available in SPLOST VII. City of Albany Buyer Corey Gamble and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis were present.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Newsome, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration to accept one of the three proposed compensation and classification study plans.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval for Option B. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. Under discussion, Mr. McCoy provided additional millage rates regarding the benefits increase. Commissioner Johnson asked for more time to digest the information that was received. The vote for the implementation of Option B was passed with four ayes and three nays by Commissioners Edwards, Gaines and Johnson. There was a discussion regarding clarification of the implementation. Commissioners Edwards and Johnson were clear that they are in favor of providing raises for employees but needed to have clarity of the implementation date and funding of the study. Chairman Cohilas said that the implementation will start in October 2022 according to the document. He added that if the Board would like to put the item on the agenda to be retracted, it can be. Commissioner Gaines was not pleased because all considerations were not taken prior to the vote and she stated that she attempted to table the vote but her substitute motion was ignored. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Recess was taken at 11:59 a.m.- 12:03 p.m.

The Chairman called for the zoning consideration of Ronnie Gay & Charlotte A. Gay; owner and applicant (22-037) request to rezone 4.195 acres from R-2 (Single Family Residential District) to C-8 (Commercial Recreation District). The proposed use is for Recreational Vehicle Park. The property is located at 3420 Sylvester Road. The Planning Commission recommended approval.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Newsome, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution authorizing the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Albany for the 2022 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program in the amount of \$21,200. The Agreement stipulates that the County will receive 20% of the total award (\$106,000). County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Finance Director Martha Hendley was present.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Edwards, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 22-034 is entitled:

#### A RESOLUTION

ENTITLED  
A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE AND EXECUTION OF  
AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF  
ALBANY AND DOUGHERTY COUNTY RELATIVE TO A 2022 BYRNE  
JUSTICE ASSISTANCE (JAG) PROGRAM AWARD; REPEALING  
RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH;  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Commissioner Johnson welcomed County Attorney Alex Shalishali and he asked County Administrator McCoy to have GDOT conduct a comprehensive safety study on Liberty Expressway. He also requested that a comprehensive housing study be done to work on the tax base and that the Board have a conversation about the pay study increase. Chairman Cohilas said that Mr. Wall will be back at the next work session. It was added that we need a consistent way to pay people. Commissioner Edwards confirmed with Mr. McCoy that the employees will receive the \$1000 increase funded by ARPA in December. Commissioner Gaines shared she was concerned about the impact that the pay study increase will have on the citizens and the employees and said that today's actions were not fair.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 12:09 a.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK