

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on April 15, 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, Anthony Jones, Clinton Johnson, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Attorney Alex Shalishali, Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, 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 and Pledge of Allegiance by the Chairman, he called for approval of the minutes of the March 18th Regular Meeting and March 25th Work Session.

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

The Chairman recognized Kanisha Jones, Black Voters Matter Fund Southwest Georgia Regional Organizer, to accept the Proclamation of Dougherty County's support of closing Georgia's Health Insurance Coverage Gap. She answered questions posed by Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Jones. The proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS 18% of people in Dougherty County do not have health insurance coverage and would be eligible if Georgia accepted federal Medicaid funding to expand coverage; and

WHEREAS, healthy citizens and access to affordable health care are key to Georgia's economy and critical to business, government, healthcare and families across Georgia; and

WHEREAS, closing the healthcare coverage gap would help Dougherty County thrive by increasing the number of insured members of our community, improve the financial footing of health care providers and hospitals who treat our residents, bring new economic activity to our County, and improve the financial position of local healthcare providers and hospitals, which act as an economic multiplier by creating community-based jobs, and buoying the hospitality, retail, transportation, and real estate sectors of our local economy; and

WHEREAS, closing the health insurance coverage gap would extend affordable health insurance coverage to nearly 500,000 people across the State who cannot access the healthcare they need; and closing the healthcare coverage gap would foster a healthier workforce and boost workforce participation in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, federal funding from taxes that Georgians have already paid would cover 90% of costs for states closing the health insurance coverage gap to residents who need access to affordable health insurance; and

WHEREAS, additional incentive funds would flow under the American Rescue Plan with a two-year, five percent increase in the federal match-rate for Medicaid, which will bring an additional \$619 million to Georgia; and

WHEREAS, over the next six years, closing the health insurance coverage gap would create 20,000 new jobs in Georgia, yield a total savings of \$2.38 billion, and generate an annual economic impact of \$1.89 billion; and

WHEREAS, closing the healthcare coverage gap would increase coverage and access to healthcare for our veteran population to support and supplement the costs for their medical and mental health needs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County, Georgia calls upon the General Assembly and the Governor of Georgia to close the health insurance coverage gap in 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: _____
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman

The Chairman recognized Angelia Jones, Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee, to discuss historical markers in the unincorporated area of Dougherty County. South Central District is also known as the African-American historical area. She provided information pertaining to purchasing historic district signs/markers. There were no locations in the unincorporated area noted as historic and placing signs would require a process for placement. However, the areas within the City that have been designated do not require additional methods beyond deciding the type of sign. Commissioner Gaines requested that the trail mention W.E.B. Dubois' book "Souls of Black Folk" and be researched because our area is specifically noted. Commissioner Jones would like Ms. Jones to identify all the historic areas throughout the entire county, which included some areas that were already noted. Ms. Jones provided the process for designation. Attorney Shalishali did share the County's ordinance pertaining to historic preservation.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the Public Works Department to purchase two light towers from the Sourcewell Contract Vendor, United Rentals (Leesburg, GA) in the amount of \$24,840. The light towers are necessary for emergency and overnight work and will be used in areas where lighting is scarce. Funding is budgeted in SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis was present.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from Juvenile Court to apply for a Criminal Justice Incentive Grant Program in the amount of \$410,000 for Functional Family Therapy use. This is an annual request for the 100% grant with no local match.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the Dougherty County Jail and Dougherty County Public Defender's Office to participate in the "My Justice Portal" pilot program. The program anticipates reducing back-logged cases in the court system and the average length-of-stay for jail inmates. The cost of the program is \$136,464 and funding is available in SPLOST V. The Public Safety Committee recommends the use of the application.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the Dougherty County Jail and Dougherty County Public Defender's Office to apply for a Georgia Bar Foundation Grant in the amount of \$140,000 for the "My Justice Portal" pilot program. Approval of the grant application is requested to offset the cost of the program.

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

The Chairman called for consideration to accept the resolution declaring a 2013 Dodge Charger (from the Dougherty County Police) as surplus and authorize the sale through Charles Taylor TPA. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Mr. Brooks shared that this is standard information to transfer property to our TPA.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Edwards, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 24-017 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION

ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AS SURPLUS A SALVAGED 2013
DODGE CHARGER (VIN NO. 2C3CDXAT9DH694776) AND HAVE
SAID SURPLUS SALVAGED VEHICLE DISPOSED OF
THROUGH CHARLES TAYLOR TPA, DOUGHERTY COUNTY'S
THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR; REPEALING RESOLUTIONS
OR PARTS OF RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSE.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the approval and execution of two Permanent Sewer Easements to the City of Albany for the purpose of allowing the City to erect, construct, install, operate, inspect and repair sewer infrastructure on County-owned property across from the National Guard Armory between N. Jefferson and Monroe Street. County Attorney Alex Shalishali and Jeff Hughes, City of Albany Sewer Projects Engineer addressed.

Commissioner Gaines motioned for approval and received a second by Commissioner Jones. Commissioner Johnson motioned to table and Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. Under discussion, Attorney Shalishali shared that this was part of the City's sewer project and Mr. Hughes addressed questions of the Board. The Commission was concerned with the impact on the County's development plan. There being no further discussion, the motion to table passed unanimously by roll call.

Mr. Brooks reminded the Board of upcoming National Crime Victim's Week and joint proclamation signing. He also reminded the Board that there will be no Commission meeting on Monday, April 22nd.

Commissioner Jones thanked Ms. Angie Jones for her update to the Board.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK