

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2023

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on April 10, 2023. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Administrator Michael McCoy, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, County Clerk Jawahn Ware and other staff. The public and representatives of the media participated in person via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

After the roll call and the invocation, Chairman Heard asked the Commission to review the minutes of the March 20th Regular Meeting and March 27th Work Session.

The Chairman recognized District Attorney Greg Edwards to address concerns pertaining to opioid usage and the penalties assessed. In the past, the District Attorney's office prosecuted users that were positive for an EMIT test. He shared that this practice, alongside the Albany Dougherty Drug Unit no longer applies to prosecuting users that have drugs "inside of them". The Department of Community Supervision will be involved for individuals that violate parole. However, there are limitations and individuals have a certain number of times for violations. He mentioned provisions under the Georgia Amnesty Law and clarified that a person is prosecuted if they have more than four grams of substance in possession. A lengthy discussion ensued where clarifications were provided, and questions were answered by the Board. The questions pertained to possessions and prosecutions including a statement that the District Attorney's Office does not have a moratorium on drugs and prosecutes according to law. The Board was encouraged to contact their legislature for changes in the law to be made.

The Chairman recognized James Morgan, County Extension Coordinator, to update the Commission with the quarterly report and introduce Anna Grace Peebles, the new Family and Consumer Sciences Agent.

The Chairman recognized Jana Dyke, President & CEO, Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission, to provide the quarterly update. Ms. Dyke introduced the Director of Business Development Jessica Zurheide. She shared that Matt Red is the new Payroll Development Authority (PDA) Chairman. Throughout the presentation, questions and concerns of the Board were addressed. She shared that she would serve as a key facilitator to help spearhead having the area's "story" be told. She also mentioned upcoming events and highlighted the "Project Putney" where Samsung proposed leasing property for 45 years. The increase to the County digest is projected to be \$5,785,566 for a total tax digest projection of is \$11,317,598. Commissioner Jones stated he supports citizens of District 6 and the Planning Commission; and he is not in favor of the project.

The Chairman called for the zoning discussion of John Hancock Life Insurance Company, owner and Soon Kwon, Yejin Park, applicant; (23-019) request for special approval to allow the construction of a Solar Facility on a 744.89-acre parcel zoned AG (Agricultural District). The property is located at 1711 (1712) Hancock Rd. The Planning Commission recommended denial. Angel Gray, Planning Manager, addressed. The Public Hearing and Action are scheduled for April 17, 2023. A full presentation will be made to the Board next week and Samsung representatives will be present.

The Chairman called for a discussion to purchase a 2023 Chevrolet 1500 Pickup Truck for Public Works from the lowest quoted vendor, Prince Automotive Group (Albany, GA) in the amount of \$44,729. The truck is in stock and available for immediate delivery. The cost of the next vendor with available inventory is \$49,479. Funding is budgeted in SPLOST VII. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis was present. Mr. McCoy recommended approval due to the availability of the vehicles.

The Chairman called for a discussion to accept the resolution declaring a 2016 Ford Taurus Police Interceptor (from the Dougherty County Police Department) as surplus and authorize the sale through Underwriters Safety & Claims. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Mr. McCoy said that this is administrative housekeeping to dispose of the vehicles as part of our risk management process.

The Chairman called for a continued discussion and review of the proposed restroom access policy. County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. The County Attorney reviewed the proposals. Commissioner Edwards shared that he proposed that the City of Albany review and have a consensus to proceed. If the City does not implement, he does not think the County should proceed and “leave it alone.” He believed it will become an issue like the Sunday alcohol sales; citizens do not understand when the City and County have different policies and ordinances. The consensus was to discuss option number two and the County Attorney was directed by the Chairman to meet with the City Attorney.

The Chairman called for a continued discussion and review of the funding and development of the proposed morgue in the estimated amount of \$1,300,720. County Administrator Michael McCoy and Architect David Maschke addressed. Mr. McCoy shared that the \$1 million will be provided from the collections in SPLOST VII. The Chairman was not in favor of the suggestion to add additional contingency costs. Commissioner Edwards reminded the Board that the completion of the morgue was a goal and priority of the retreat. Commissioner Gray shared that the recent visit [to the current morgue] revealed that there are many available buildings, possibly owned by Phoebe, that can be utilized. Commissioner Newsome was opposed to proceeding with the current proposal and shared that additional due diligence was needed by the Board. He added that we are mandated to provide a functioning morgue and this proposal exceeds that request.

The Chairman called for a discussion to consider the funding and development of a proposed multi-generational community facility at Putney Park in the estimated amount of \$982,850. County Administrator Michael McCoy and Architect David Maschke addressed. Mr. McCoy reminded individuals that this was a priority of the Commission meeting. He

gave a historical reminder of funding attempts that were not received. It was foreseen that the building would be utilized for programming by the City of Albany [Recreation Department]. Commissioner Gray suggested that this facility also double as a polling place for the Putney area. The Chairman requested that there be more discussion so that additional amenities be added to possibly expand the concept of a safe room. Mr. McCoy shared that this was not designed to be a safe room, but a recommendation can be made to do so. There was consent for Mr. Maschke to proceed. Commissioner Edwards would like the Recreation Committee to review and propose to use funding in SPLOST VII. Commissioner Gaines asked if we will be operating as a Board of a whole or using committees. Mr. McCoy shared with Chairman Heard that normally the Chairman directs items to committees. The Chairman said that committees could be utilized more, and Commissioner Edwards voiced his concern regarding consistency in funding and agenda listing.

Commissioner Johnson wanted an update on the incident at Robert Cross Park and shared that he will wait to receive it next week. Commissioner Gaines wanted staff to provide a deadline on when goals [from the retreat] will be accomplished with tasks. Mr. McCoy shared that he needed guidance from the Board because this request is a deviation from the past but will take action. The Chairman will meet with Mr. McCoy for further discussion. A slide presentation of the Chairman's first 100 days was shown.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK