

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 3, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on June 3, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Anthony Jones, Clinton Johnson, and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Attorney Alex Shalishali, Acting 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. Commissioner Victor Edwards was absent.

After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by the Chairman, he called for approval of the minutes of the May 6th Regular Meeting and May 13th Work Session.

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

The Chairman recognized SOWEGA Rising Founder and Executive Director Sherrell Byrd to accept the proclamation recognizing the first Friday, June 7, 2024 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day in Dougherty County. Ms. Byrd shared that it was "Wear Orange Week" in the nation, and this was the 3rd annual proclamation in the community. She requested that our leaders take a strong stance and create policies against gun violence. It was noted that there was an alarming rate of gun violence among the youth in our community. The weekly events were shared and Commissioner Johnson and Chairman Heard asked for examples of what others were doing. Ms. Byrd provided examples highlighting the need for a gun task force. Many members agreed that many individuals needed to be involved, stressing involving the youth. Mr. Tracy Taylor, Yolanda Brown, the mother of youth Nigel Brown who was killed in our community and his siblings were also present. Mr. Brooks said that he would work with the City of Albany to light the foundation orange to support the gun violence week. After reading the proclamation, she shared the alarming rate of black maternal health death rates. Her organization was working with the state to create a program through the Morehouse School of Medicine to be community perinatal navigators also known as doulas were shared. Three women Dwan Ashe, Phylicia Price and Sharri Anderson were present, and Deputy County Clerk Bristeria Clark Hope was also recognized as a participant. The proclamation reads as follows:

**2024 DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA PROCLAMATION
DECLARING THE FIRST FRIDAY IN JUNE TO BE**

NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY

This proclamation declares the first Friday in June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day in Dougherty County Georgia to honor and remember all victims and survivors of gun violence and to declare that we as a country must do more to end this public health crisis.

WHEREAS, every day, more than 120 Americans are killed by gun violence and more than 200 are shot and wounded, with an average of more than 18,000-gun homicides every year; and

WHEREAS, in Georgia (state) has 1,927-gun deaths every year, with a rate of 17.9 deaths per 100,000 people, a crisis that costs the state \$23.9 billion each year, of which \$597 million is paid by taxpayers. Georgia has the 15th highest rate of gun deaths in the US; and

WHEREAS, in January 2013, Hadiya Pendleton was tragically shot and killed at age 15; and on June 7, 2024 to recognize the 27th birthday of Hadiya Pendleton (born: June 2, 1997), people across the United States will recognize National Gun Violence Awareness Day and wear orange in tribute to -(1) Hadiya Pendleton and other victims of gun violence; and (2) the loved ones of those victims; and

WHEREAS, the idea was inspired by a group of Hadiya's friends, who asked their classmates to commemorate her life by wearing orange; they chose this color because hunters wear orange to announce themselves to other hunters when out in the woods, and orange is a color that symbolizes the value of human life; and

WHEREAS, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on June 7th, the first Friday in June 2024, to help raise awareness about gun violence; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 7, 2024 Americans will raise awareness about gun violence and honor the lives of gun violence victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the hands of people who should not have access to them and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our families and communities safe.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Chairman Lorenzo L. Heard of the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County declares the first Friday in June 7, 2024, to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day. I encourage all citizens to support their local communities' efforts to prevent the tragic effects of gun violence and to honor and value human lives.

This the 3rd day of June, 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: _____
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman

The Chairman recognized Angel Gray, Deputy Director of Planning & Development Services, to provide an overview of the Albany Dougherty Land Bank. Ms. Gray highlighted how the Land Bank was created and shared that the primary purpose was to return tax-delinquent properties to productive use. Acquisition and disposition of properties were discussed. The vast accomplishments including partnerships and community developments were presented to the Board. Commissioner Jones encouraged Ms. Gray to share the personal recognition she received. She provided in-depth information pertaining to tax foreclosures success stories with this type of acquisition and potential partnerships with Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA).

The Chairman recognized Cedrick Shelton, Owner of Tim's Artistic Art, to discuss procurement concerns in regard to his services not being utilized.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from Public Works to apply for the FY 2024 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Local Road Assistance (LRA) Supplemental Funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation in the amount of \$558,492.34. The funds will be used for adding a sidewalk on the north side of Honeysuckle from the railroad tracks to Radium Springs Road, adding a turn lane off of Honeysuckle into the Radium Springs Middle School, and resurfacing 1.05 miles of roads. There is no local match required. The application deadline is June 15th. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and Engineering Manager Jeremy Brown addressed. Mr. Brown explained that the County typically has a 30% match for LMIG, but the supplemental funding requires no match. Additionally, information regarding the project design was shared.

Commissioner Newsome moved for approval. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Gaines asked for clarity on a statement. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation for three Speed Hump Installations for Phoebe Road (Phoebe Park Subdivision). The estimated cost is \$17,055 and funding is available in TSPLOST. The County's Traffic Calming Policy requires that the Commission approve or deny the request. In the May 20, 2024, Regular Meeting action was not taken. County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Attorney Shalishali shared that on May 20th, the Board appeared to take action on this item. However, the Robert's Rules of Order, there needed to be a motion, second and action. Upon the question of Commissioner

Johnson, the Attorney mentioned that our ordinance adopted to use of Robert's Rules. However, if our rules conflict with Robert's Rules, ours take precedence.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. The motion failed with two ayes by Commissioners Newsome and Jones and four nays by Commissioners Johnson, Gray, Gaines and Chairman Heard.

The Chairman called for consideration of the proposed board appointments.

There was clarification made that the original vote was 3/2. Attorney Shalishali had previously shared that under Robert's Rules of Order with abstains, the majority prevailed. However, our ordinance dictates that there needed to be a 4th vote. The nomination by Commissioner Jones for Mr. Cooper failed due to a lack of a second and five nays by Commissioners Newsome, Johnson, Gray, Gaines, and Chairman Heard. Upon the nomination by Commissioner Gaines, Commissioner Clinton Johnson was appointed to the ASPIRE Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Services Board to fill a three-year term ending June 30, 2027, with five ayes by Commissioners Newsome, Johnson, Gray, Gaines, and Chairman Heard and one nay by Commissioner Jones.

Mr. Brooks will be meeting with the Interim City Manager to discuss the Municipal Court, task force, and downtown security including the Government Building. It was added that the Board would like the split of cost to be 50/50. It was mentioned that the City of Albany was seeking a certified 911 center, and the County may have to make policy changes pertaining to the upgrade. It was shared that the County's MOU will need to be clarified for the tennis center and there will be a Finance Committee Meeting at 10 am on the upcoming Wednesday. Attorney Shalishali said that \$19,904.30 would be received on the opioid settlement and commended the City's Attorney Nathan Davis on his retirement. Upon the request of Commissioner Johnson, the Attorney clarified the use of funds. Commissioner Gray suggested that there be an oversight panel created to make suggestions for funds and did not object to the topic being settled through the Public Health Committee. Commissioner Newsome recognized Commissioner Russell Gray for being the Vice President of ACCG. Commissioner Johnson invited all to the upcoming Finance Committee Meetings and shared an update on the tour of the Jail. He commended the building on its good condition despite being 35 years old. It was shared that the County needed to be on the radar for the next steps on the best approach for the Jail. Mr. Brooks clarified information regarding the life cycle and department needs. Commissioner Gaines shared that she was not sure how to address the rising population of the Jail. Mr. Brooks addressed and reminded the Board that we were hosting other inmates due to renovations to other facilities. Commissioner Jones shared the same sentiments with Commissioner Gray and wished City Attorney Nathan Davis a great retirement. Chairman Heard congratulated Commissioner Gaines who will continue serving District 5 and recognized that the upcoming Wednesday will be the first anniversary of Mr. Brooks serving the County.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the County Attorney to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate and then to adjourn.

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

There being no further discussion, the Board entered into Executive Session at 12:02 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK