

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

February 27, 2023

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on February 27, 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 and Anthony Jones. 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. Commissioner Ed Newsome was absent.

After the roll call, Chairman Heard provided an invocation and asked the Commission to review the minutes of the February 6th Regular Meeting and February 13th Work Session.

The Chairman recognized William Wright, a representative for AFRAM Tech, Inc., to share information on urban inequality and on a study that was conducted. He plans to come back with more information about the Mainstreet Lending Program and will provide additional details to the Chairman and Mr. McCoy. Commissioner Gaines shared that it would be good to explore if the "majority" in our community (which includes minority business owners) are missing an opportunity with the government. Mr. McCoy said that he will add this discussion to a future work session.

The Chairman called for a discussion to accept the bid from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, BHM Farms, LLC DBA South Georgia Turf Care (Leesburg, Ga) for the Public Works Right of Way Mowing Project in the amount of \$52,797.96. Six bids were received with the highest being \$297,306. Funding is budgeted in the Special Tax District. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and City of Albany Buyer Tina Strassenberg were present. Mr. McCoy said that due to staff shortage and an increased workload, it was recommended and budgeted to privatize mowing. This is the first of several being presented. Mr. Mathis addressed questions of the board. Commissioner Gaines wanted HR to look at other barriers that may be preventing employees from applying for these jobs. The Chairman suggested exploring areas where the "majority/minority" businesses could receive information beyond the government and newspapers.

The Chairman called for a discussion to accept the bid from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Pro Outdoor (Albany, Ga) for the Public Works Riverfront Park Landscaping and Lawn Maintenance River Park and Resource Center Project in the amount of \$70,081.08. Five bids were received with the highest being \$110,075. Funding is budgeted in ARPA. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and City of Albany Buyer Tina Strassenberg were present. Mr. McCoy shared that this is standard practice for Riverfront Park and it has been competitively bid.

Commissioner Johnson shared that the Commission should look at more practical ways to provide this funding beyond ARPA. Mr. McCoy also gave the historical context of how this was a cost-saving measure and how it would return to use of the General Fund. It was added that SPLOST is not for operating expenses. He shared upon a question from Commissioner Edwards that the special tax district is well funded and why the first project was funded by that source. He said that our process was followed regarding the administrative guidelines for operations. If the Board decided to take other action, staff will oblige, but the recommendation made is for the County's best interest. It was shared that the majority of the Board was in favor of adhering to staff recommendations. Commissioner Gaines asked for an administrative/legal opinion on if projects can be divided. Mr. McCoy gave options that the Board had; to include not awarding. Mr. Mathis said that staff is reliant on the awards proceeding so they would not get further behind on mowing. Attorney Shalishali shared concerns that the Board should not be involved in operational decisions. Commissioner Gaines clarified the request and asked the attorney to follow up. She also reconfirmed that the Board could take action to include return bids with specific guidelines or recommendations, but vetting is under operational (Administration) guidelines. A very lengthy discussion ensued with Commissioner Gray stressing that the County should not get into ethical gray areas and allow staff to continue to present options that are in the best interest of the County. The Chairman directed the attorney to review.

The Chairman called for a discussion to accept the bid from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Ray the Handyman (Ashburn, Ga) for the Public Works County Parks Mowing Project in the amount of \$116,040. Thirteen bids were received with the highest being \$263,880. Funding is budgeted in ARPA. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and City of Albany Buyer Tina Strassenberg were present. Commissioner Edwards said that this contract could have been divided among multiple vendors. He added that this request is not just for black vendors but to involve more small business contractors.

The Chairman called for a discussion to purchase ten pole cameras for Dougherty County Police from Flock Safety (Atlanta, GA) in the amount of \$58,500. The payment amount will be broken down into two annual payments (year #1 \$31,000 and year #2 \$27,500). The pole cameras will be installed in various locations throughout Dougherty County and will assist in criminal investigations by analyzing vehicle license plates, state recognition, and vehicle attributes such as color, type, make, and objects. Funding is budgeted in the Special Services District Fund. County Administrator Michael McCoy and Chief Kenneth Johnson addressed. Mr. McCoy shared that this was a new service that Chief Johnson recommended last year and it will be an aid in enforcement. Chief Johnson shared the statistics of the City of Albany's success and how there has been a crime reduction nationwide. Laura Holland, a representative from Flock, was present and answered questions. Chief Johnson mentioned that this is Phase 1 and potential locations were not disclosed for safety reasons. Commissioner Gray shared personal knowledge of the system.

The Chairman called for a discussion to approve the five-year renewal of the Judicial Alternatives of Georgia, Inc (JAG) Probation Services Agreement with the Superior Court of Dougherty County effective January 1, 2023. County Administrator Michael McCoy

addressed. Mr. McCoy said that this is administrative housekeeping and approval is recommended.

The Chairman called for a discussion to approve the five-year renewal of the Judicial Alternatives of Georgia, Inc (JAG) Probation Services Agreement with the Magistrate Court of Dougherty County effective January 1, 2023. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed.

The Chairman called for a discussion to revise the Dougherty County Board of Commissioner's COVID Guidelines and discontinue paid leave under FFCRA (Families First Corona Virus Response Act) and ARPA (American Rescue Plan). County Administrator Michael McCoy and Interim HR Director Erica Potts addressed. Mr. McCoy recommended approval and said that our policies have not been updated since 2020. He also shared that we try to make sure our government guidelines align with the CDC guidelines.

The Chairman called for a discussion to accept the required resolutions updating the authorized personnel for the Georgia Fund I accounts and accepting the required resolutions authorizing Georgia Fund I to accept funding for the LGIP account. The new account will receive funding from the Opioid Epidemic Litigation. County Administrator Michael McCoy and Finance Director Martha Hendley addressed. Mr. McCoy said that we were successful in the class action lawsuit and that the account will segregate funds. Loose guidelines on what funds can be utilized will be redistributed to the Board.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the proposed board appointment. County Clerk Jawahn Ware addressed.

Dougherty County Development Authority- There is one appointment with a four-year unexpired term ending December 31, 2023. There is one new applicant: Michael Tabarrok.

Commissioner Gray suggested looking at dissolving this Board due to inactivity. He shared that the purpose can be done through other authorities. Commissioner Johnson shared that there are opportunities within this Board that can be a tool for Dougherty County.

The Chairman called for a discussion with the County Administrator to provide an update on the Radium Springs Water Tower and obtain Board direction on the requested action. Mr. McCoy said that if we put this out for bid, we will be doing so without funding sources. The County does not own the tower or property. Suggestions were made for the Board to consider removing this as a safety risk. Mr. McCoy shared that the property can be taken as eminent domain and confirmed that the tower will not be operational. Chris Harvey, President of the Radium Springs Association, spoke in regard to saving the tower for aesthetic purposes. The ask of \$150,000 was for restoration but he asked, at a minimum, for assistance to secure the tower. Mr. McCoy said that the staff recommendation is to remove the structure if it will not be refurbished. Project Manager Jeremy Brown shared structural concerns and actions that the County took. He also said that this is a specialized project and the cost could vary.

Depending on demolition costs, the most likely recommendation will be to tear down the structure and scrap the metals.

Chairman Heard reminded the Board of decorum of addressing the Chair and not individual Commissioners.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK