

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

October 4, 2021

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on October 4, 2021. Chairman Christopher Cohilas presided and called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Commissioners present were Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson and Anthony Jones. Commissioner Ed Newsome participated via the audio-conferencing feature. Also present were County Administrator Michael McCoy, Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison, County Attorney Spencer Lee, 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, the Chairman called for approval of August 16th Regular Meeting, August 30th Special Called Meeting and September 13th Regular Meeting.

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

The Chairman recognized David Hodges, Chief Ranger, to provide the Georgia Forestry Commission Annual Report. Mr. Hodges presented his report from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. He stated that he was responsible for 130,792 forested acres in Dougherty County and shared that a burn permit for the yard is no longer required and the restrictions were reviewed upon question by Commissioner Jones. Other statistics and updates were provided.

The Chairman recognized Fredando Jackson with Flint River Fresh to give a year one recap of the Dougherty Fresh initiative. Dougherty Fresh is a partnership with Flint River Fresh, UGA Extension Office and Dougherty County. Mr. Jackson recapped the organization's mission and shared that their goals stemmed from a survey that was distributed in the community. He also discussed successful weekly mobile markets and nutritional support initiatives. Information referencing the Commissioner's desire for the Food Policy Council was shared. In year one, the following took place:

- over 2,680 fresh produce packages and/ or deliveries were done;
- 190 at-home garden kits were provided;
- 16 engagement events were conducted; and
- 8 new fresh healthy food access points were established.

Due to the pandemic, a virtual community garden seminar was held and questions and comments from the Board were answered.

The Chairman recognized William Wright, dba Afram-Tech, Inc. to continue the presentation on subsequent analysis of intervening issues with nine metro-counties in the State of Georgia as compatible to Dougherty County and provide an update on the SBA Supplemental Targeted Advance and Targeted EIDL Advance.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation to accept the annual resolution authorizing the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission to execute and file the renewal of the annual application on behalf of Dougherty County with the Georgia Department of Transportation and the United States Department of Transportation for a grant for public transportation assistance under Section 5311 Regional Transit Program.

Commissioner Gray moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Johnson, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-053 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN
APPLICATION WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION FOR A GRANT FOR PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANT UNDER TITLE 49 U.S.C.,
SECTION 5311.

The Chairman called for consideration of the nomination of the County Voting Delegate at the ACCG ReConnect Conference Business Session on November 13, 2021, in Savannah, GA. Chairman Cohilas addressed.

Upon the nomination by Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Anthony Jones was unanimously appointed as the County Voting Delegate.

The Chairman called for the consideration of the recommendation from the Emergency Medical Services Department to apply for a State of Georgia FY2020 Naloxone Statewide Initiative Grant in the amount of \$16,692 to purchase a year's supply of naloxone. This is a 100% grant with no local match required. EMS Director Sam Allen addressed. Mr. Allen shared that naloxone is narcan and helps to treat a narcotic overdose in emergency situations.

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

Mr. McCoy provided an update on the proposed tennis center. He said that a recommendation will be provided within 30 days and added that there are preliminary plans in place but we are currently addressing some concerns with the location. He also said that an expansion of another park is also being reviewed and two potential design changes will be presented.

Chairman Christopher Cohilas provided an update on the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce's 2021 Washington, DC, Fly In. Chairman Cohilas provided the historical change on the base and concerns regarding the impact of the previous storm financially on the Marine Corps Logistics Base. He also discussed the advocacy needs specifically for broadband and showed some pictures from the recent event.

Attorney Spencer Lee provided a review of the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County form of government. Attorney Lee provided a high-level overview for the Commissioners to review the Code of Ordinance referencing the need for the adherence Section 2-2-21 of the County's Code of Ordinances. The Chairman commented on the dilation of powers and Commissioner Edwards requested that an orientation be conducted for newly elected Commissioners. Commissioner Edwards also suggested that any concerns by employees against a Commissioner should go to the Government Affairs Committee as opposed to the County Administrator; and he requested a structural policy be created because he said a County Administrator cannot reprimand a Commissioner. Chairman Cohilas addressed how some of the concerns countered the whistleblower laws and the State's form of government. Chairman Cohilas restated that this ordinance is for the protection of Commissioners and employees. After a lengthy discussion, Attorney Lee suggested that the best way to address this concern is for the Chairman, County Administrator and the Attorney to meet to further discuss. Commissioner Jones suggested that the Board participate in sensitivity training. Attorney Lee asked that the Chairman revise the agenda so that the Executive Session will be listed as potential and pending litigation and personnel.

Commissioner Edwards asked Mr. McCoy to provide an update on the speed bumps on Astoria Drive. Mr. McCoy shared that the decision made to deny was not made by the County Administrator but by the County's Traffic Calming Policy. Mr. McCoy added that any revisions made would be a policy change made by the Board. Attorney Lee said that the Board would need to adhere to its policy but can revise it if desired. Commissioner Edwards wanted alternatives for the concern and Chairman Cohilas requested that an open discussion be held at the next work session. The Chairman clarified that the County Administrator does not create policies but the Board does. Commissioner Jones shared concerns about the several rezoning requests. He added that once the requests are approved, the requestors are changing their type of business. He asked that the Planning and Code Enforcement come and address the Commission and the Chairman noted this as a compliance issue. Commissioner Johnson mentioned the closing of Coats and Clark and announced an upcoming job fair. He asked the Chairman to allow Paul Forgey to review and the Board possibly adopt the State's tiny home ordinance. Attorney Lee said the zoning regulation would need to be reviewed. Chairman Cohilas revised the request and asked for an update on the State's ordinance first. Lastly, Commissioner Johnson welcomed the Albany State University alumni to the city for homecoming week.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the County Attorney to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing potential and pending litigation and personnel and then to adjourn.

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

There being no further discussion, the Board entered into Executive Session at 12:30 pm.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK