

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

May 22, 2023

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on May 22, 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 May 1st Regular Meeting and May 8th Work Session.

The Chairman announced an amendment to the agenda for Mr. McCoy to provide an update on the Assistant County Administrator position under the County Administrator Update.

The Chairman recognized Public Works Director Chuck Mathis who was present to accept the Proclamation recognizing May 21-27, 2023 as Public Works Week in Dougherty County. Mr. Mathis announced the Manager of the Year, Benita Dyes and Employee of the Year, Russell Malone. Prior to the presentation of the plaque, Board members and the Administrator provided kudos and sentiments. Mr. Mathis invited the Board to participate in the upcoming employee celebration. The Proclamation reads as follows:

**National Public Works Week Proclamation**  
**May 21–27, 2023**  
**“Connecting the World Through Public Works”**

WHEREAS, public works professionals focus on infrastructure, facilities and services that are of vital importance to sustainable and resilient communities and to the public health, high quality of life and well-being of the people of Dougherty County, Albany, Georgia; and,

WHEREAS, these infrastructure, facilities and services could not be provided without the dedicated efforts of public works professionals, who are engineers, managers, and employees at all levels of government and the private sector, who are responsible for rebuilding, improving, and protecting our nation's transportation, water supply, water treatment and solid waste systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities essential for our citizens; and,

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest for the citizens, civic leaders and children in Dougherty County, Albany, Georgia to gain knowledge of and maintain an ongoing

interest and understanding of the importance of public works and public works programs in their respective communities; and,

WHEREAS, the year 2023 marks the 63rd annual National Public Works Week sponsored by the American Public Works Association/Canadian Public Works Association be it now, RESOLVED, I, Lorenzo L. Heard, Commission Chairman, do hereby designate the week May 21–27, 2023 as National Public Works Week; I urge all citizens to join with representatives of the American Public Works Association and government agencies in activities, events, and ceremonies designed to pay tribute to our public works professionals, engineers, managers, and employees and to recognize the substantial contributions they make to protecting our national health, safety, and quality of life.

DONE at the Dougherty County, Albany, Georgia this 22nd day of May 2023.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman

The Chairman recognized EMS Director Sam Allen who was present to update the Commission to accept the Proclamation recognizing May 21-27, 2023 as Emergency Management Services Week in Dougherty County. Mr. Allen shared that there are four shifts and some members from Shift A were present. Prior to the presentation of the plaque, Board members provided kudos and sentiments. Many of the Commissioners noted that they have never received a complaint against the department. The Proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS, emergency medical services are a vital public service; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and

WHEREAS, access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, the emergency medical care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, the emergency medical services system consists of emergency physicians, emergency nurses, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, firefighters, educators, administrators and others; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers by designating Emergency Medical Services Week; now

THEREFORE, we, the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County, Georgia in recognition of this event does hereby proclaim the week of May 21–27, 2023 as

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the County of Dougherty on this 22nd day of May in the year of our Lord two-thousand and twenty-three.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA**

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Lorenzo L. Heard, Chairman

The Chairman recognized SOWEGA Rising Founder and Executive Director Sherrell Byrd who was present to accept the Proclamation recognizing June 2, 2023 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day. The Board was asked to help rally with others in helping to pass legislation on gun laws. It was shared that Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> is National June Violence Awareness Day and the community is invited to wear orange. Mr. Tracy Taylor invited the Board to participate in the local community awareness event scheduled for Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Shabrina Brigham, grandmother of Nigel Brown, a small child that was a victim of gun violence, also addressed the Board. The Proclamation reads as follows:

**2023 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 17,000 gun homicides every year; and

WHEREAS, in Georgia has 1,868 gun deaths every year, with a rate of 17.4 deaths per 100,000 people, a crisis that costs the state \$23.9 billion each year, of which \$597.8 million is paid by taxpayers. Georgia has the 10th highest rate of gun deaths in the US; and

WHEREAS, gun violence prevention is more important than ever as we see an increase in firearm homicides, and nonfatal shootings across the country, increased calls to domestic violence hotlines, and an increase in city gun violence;

WHEREAS, in January 2013, Hadiya Pendleton was tragically shot and killed at age 15; and on June 2, 2023 to recognize the 26th 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, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on June 2nd, the first Friday in June in 2023, to help raise awareness about gun violence; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 2, 2023 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 the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County declares the first Friday in June 2, 2023, 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 22nd day of May, 2023.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman

The Chairman recognized ASPIRE CEO Dana Glass who was present to accept the Proclamation recognizing May as Mental Health Month. Ms. Glass provided an update to the Board pertaining to personnel, upcoming events, and services. Julie Cosper, from the Region

4 Field Office was also present and both addressed questions of the Board. The Proclamation reads as follows:

**Mental Health Month 2023**  
**“Look Around, Look Within”**

WHEREAS, the area that someone lives in plays a significant role in their overall health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, surroundings can impact if, how, and when a person’s needs are met, which in turn affects mental health; and

WHEREAS, having safe, stable, and healthy home conditions set the foundation for achieving and maintaining good mental health; and

WHEREAS, with early and effective interventions, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, with early and effective treatment, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider, organization, and citizen share the burden of mental health problems and has a responsibility to promote mental wellness and support prevention efforts.

THEREFORE, I Lorenzo L. Heard, do hereby proclaim May 2023 as Mental Health Month in Dougherty County. As the Chairman, I also call upon the citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in Dougherty County to recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health, the steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions.

DONE at the Dougherty County, Albany, Georgia this 22nd day of May 2023.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman

The Chairman recognized Operations Manager Melvin Williams and Heavy Equipment Operator Julius Barber present to be recognized for placing at the Solid Waste Association’s Equipment Road-E-O. Solid Waste Director Campbell Smith provided information regarding the accomplishment.

The Chairman called for a discussion to approve the Alcohol Application from JNKR Inc., Rushabh Bharat Patel licensee, dba Lotus, at 1000 Liberty Expressway for Package- Beer and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal's Office recommended approval. Chief Deputy Anthony Donaldson, Code Enforcement Department, addressed and confirmed that this a new construction and considering that the location is in the County, Sunday alcohol sales will be allowed.

The Chairman called for a discussion to declare one 2011 Peterbilt Dump Truck and one 2017 Adapco Guardian 190 G4 ULV Machine as surplus and authorize the sale in the amount of \$11,200 of the same to the Randolph County Board of Commissioners. This request was made on behalf of Randolph County Manager Dr. Deborah Jones. County Administrator Micheal McCoy addressed and clarified the surplus process to another government for Commissioner Johnson. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis was present.

The Chairman called for discussion to amend the SPLOST VII budget in the amount of \$10,556,060.58. SPLOST VII collections ended on March 31, 2023, and the budget must be amended to report the collections received over the budgeted amount. The SPLOST VII projects within the SPLOST Fund need to be amended by \$3,800,181.81 and interest earned amended by \$650,654.72. Projects approved by the Board in the May 1, 2023, Regular Meeting for Putney Park and Morgue need to be entered in the SPLOST Fund as approved, leaving an unappropriated amount of \$1,395,836.53. County Administrator Michael McCoy shared that this was administrative housekeeping. Due to an overcollection and interest earned, the funds need to be reallocated. He clarified that the handout listed the Government Center but needed to be renamed. Mr. McCoy shared based on Commissioner Johnson's question that the projects were part of a scheduled replacement but were unfunded. Finance Director Martha Hendley was present.

The Chairman called for discussion to increase and amend the General Fund budget by \$3,198,040 for a total budget of \$62,179,734 and increase and amend the Special Services District Fund in the amount of \$221,362 for a total budget of \$9,213,290. The budgets must be amended to reflect the amounts recommended in the Payroll Cost Study. Funding is available in ARPA and was budgeted at the beginning of FY23, but the actual budget for each department was not known until the study was received. This amendment is necessary to allocate to each department the amount that the study increased the department's budget. County Administrator Michael McCoy shared in layman's terms that the ARPA funding is being utilized for the pay study implementation. It was clarified that there will be remaining funds carried over for FY24 and more details will be provided in the following Finance Committee Meeting. Finance Director Martha Hendley was present.

Under updates, Mr. McCoy reminded the Board that in observance of the Memorial Day Holiday on Monday, May 29, 2023 there will not be a scheduled meeting held. The next meeting will be on Monday, June 5, 2023. He announced the hiring of new Assistant County Administrator, Barry Brooks.

The Chairman shared the concern that he, nor the Board, were aware of the decision being made. Amidst the Chairman's statements, Commissioner Johnson inquired if this discussion

should be held in Executive Session and it was the preference of the Attorney. Commissioner Johnson then motioned to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. It was unanimously approved by roll call to enter into Executive Session at 11:31 am and the Board reconvened at 12:38 pm.

The Chairman made a motion that County Administrator Micheal McCoy be relieved of his duties, understanding by law, that he is to be paid out the full of his contract, to December 31<sup>st</sup>, and to rescind the hiring of the Assistant. A motion to deny was offered by Commissioner Gray. The second by Commissioner Edwards was clarified to be made to the initial motion of the Chairman and not that of Commissioner Gray. Commissioner Newsome seconded the motion of Commissioner Gray. A roll call was started and Commissioner Gray questioned parliamentary procedure and a discussion was then held. Commissioner Gray was vocal about the potential liability that the County can face if the Administrator was removed. Commissioner Johnson asked for the opinion of the County Attorney, who discouraged the continuation of the conversation and encouraged the Board to take action on another agenda. Attorney Shalishi provided clarity on the County's practice of not voting on motions in a Work Session. Upon Commissioner Jones' inquiry of who will run the County, [if the initial motion was passed], the Chairman shared that the department heads will do so until there is a Special Called Meeting. Commissioner Newsome voiced his concerns about the potential removal of the Administrator and the impact it will have on the County. After the roll call was re-initiated by the Chairman for the denial of the initial motion, it failed with three ayes by Commissioners Gray, Jones, and Newsome and four nays by Commissioners Edwards, Gaines, Johnson and Chairman Heard. The original motion was restated and passed via roll call with four ayes by Commissioners Edwards, Gaines, Johnson, and Chairman Heard and three nays by Commissioners Gray, Jones and Newsome.

Commissioner Johnson asked that an economic development task force be created and comprised by Commissioners to discuss the economic future of Dougherty County. Commissioner Gaines echoed the need for the same. Commissioners Gray and Jones shared that this was a "sad day for Dougherty County". The Chairman shared statistics pertaining to the County and shared that there needs to be a new way to attract people to the area and something different must be done and he stood by his commitment to making the County grow.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK