

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2024 DRAFT

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on September 16, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones, and Ed Newsome. Also present were Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, County Clerk Jawahn Ware, and other staff. The public and 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 by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the August 19th Regular Meeting, August 19th Tax Public Hearing, August 26th Work Session, August 26th Special Called Meeting and August 29th Special Called Meeting.

The Chairman recognized Gloria Baker, Yvette Greene, Cynthia Reliford Smith, and Sebeca Pledger Jordan to accept the proclamation recognizing September as Alopecia Awareness Month in Dougherty County. Ms. Baker said that she will be having an event for awareness and would like the support from the Board. The proclamation reads as follows:

**DOUGHERTY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PROCLAIM THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2024 ALOPECIA  
AWARENESS MONTH IN DOUGHERTY COUNTY**

WHEREAS, Alopecia is a medical condition that causes hair loss due to an autoimmune disorder which damages hair follicles. This condition can affect hair on the scalp, eyebrows, and various parts of the body, with hair loss occurring in small or large patches; and

WHEREAS, Alopecia affects an estimated 6.8 million individuals across the United States, with no regard to age, race, or gender. While the condition can develop in anyone, it frequently begins during childhood, often leading to significant physical, emotional, and psychological effects on those affected; and

WHEREAS, September is recognized as Alopecia Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about this condition and supporting those living with it. Established in 1986 as a week-long recognition, Alopecia Awareness has since grown into a national movement, championed by individuals and organizations alike; and

WHEREAS, the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the importance of educating the public about alopecia, promoting research, and supporting residents impacted by the condition. National organizations such as the National Alopecia Areata Foundation (NAAF) work tirelessly to advocate for individuals with alopecia, providing resources, promoting research, and offering support to families; and

WHEREAS, during Alopecia Awareness Month, we encourage all citizens to learn more about this condition, promote understanding and acceptance, and offer support to the millions of individuals nationwide, including those in Dougherty County, who are affected by alopecia; and

WHEREAS, we especially recognize Gloria Baker, Yvette Greene, Cynthia Reliford Smith, Tristan Richardson, and Sebeca Pledger Jordan, each of whom are individuals living with alopecia, for their courage, strength, and resilience in the face of this condition; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim the month of September 2024 as Alopecia Awareness Month in Dougherty County. We encourage all citizens to join in this effort to increase awareness, foster inclusivity, and support ongoing research for treatment and prevention of alopecia.

This the 16th day of September 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman  
Dougherty County Commission

The Chairman called for a recommendation Fred Orton, applicant and owner (24-038) request to rezone a 44.57-acre parcel from R-2 (Single-Family Residential District) and AG (Agricultural District) to AG (Agricultural District). The rezoning would allow for the portion of property zoned R-2 to align with Agricultural uses. The property is at 2615 Liberty Expressway SE. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Tanner Anderson, Planner I, addressed. He shared that the desire was consistency (in the area) and questions of Commissioners Johnson and Jones were answered.

The Chairman called for a recommendation for the ratification of the emergency repair to Fleming Road in the amount of \$196,225 to Reeves Construction Company (Albany, Ga). The Commission provided consensus to the repair in the July 29, 2024 Work Session. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Mr. Brooks thanked the Board for allowing the project to be addressed. Per the questions of Commissioner Johnson, Mr. Mathis shared that local contractors were contacted regarding the emergency and this vendor was the only one available. Commissioner Jones said that we were able to repair this major thoroughfare.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the Dougherty County Commission to allow the County Administrator, as well as his/her designee, to have the authority to approve or deny requests for transfers of alcohol licenses in the unincorporated area in lieu of having action by the Board of Commissioners. The City of Albany updated their policies in 2022 allowing the change. The Marshal's Division is requesting that the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners take the

same action to allow staff in the Code Enforcement Department to follow the same procedures for both entities. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Chief Deputy, Anthony Donaldson addressed. Mr. Brooks clarified the requests pertaining to transfers and shared that the Marshal's Office still has to research. This allows the process to be simplified and efficient and would make a seamless process to mirror the City of Albany. It was clarified for Commissioner Gray by Chief Donaldson that if there was a request for a transfer from the City of Albany to Dougherty County, the Board would be involved because it does impact the number of licenses.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the revised cost estimate to pave the Poinciana Street (north) alley. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis addressed. Mr. Mathis reviewed the numbers and confirmed for Commissioner Johnson that the proposals align with our paving policy. The Board was reminded that consent from the railroad was required for permanent improvements. Prior to the Regular Meeting, Commissioner Edwards would like to view the areas with Mr. Mathis. Upon a question from Commissioner Gray, Mr. Mathis shared that there were definitions for alley improvements that involve improving an area from its natural state. It was noted that it was not just limited to paving. Commissioner Gray was concerned about the consistency and future requests. A discussion of the historical action for Red Bud was held. Mr. Mathis shared that some addresses did not have access. Commissioner Gray stressed that we were using financial consultants and this request was not budgeted, nor does it have an emergent need, so consideration for future project lists should be done and the project should be placed on hold. He also said that the impact was only for 1.5 homes and the request is a significant amount of money.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to declare the listed vehicles and equipment as surplus and authorize the disposal of or sale of same via an online auction. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Mr. Brooks shared that this was our standard quarterly process.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to accept the Financial Advisory Services Agreement from Davenport Public Finance in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. This amount is within the Administrator's authority to accept, however, when combined with the \$15,000 agreement from May for work related to the County's FY 24-25 budget and 2024 tax digest, the cumulative amount exceeds the Administrator's \$20,000 limitation. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Mr. Brooks mentioned that he was not creating precedence to bring requests to the Board, but he wanted to bring transparency because it was the same vendor in the same fiscal year. Commissioner Gaines asked about the wording of the ordinance. Mr. Brooks shared that the County Attorney could better address but as a practical matter, he would feel better being transparent because it was the same vendor of related matters. Attorney Shalishali read the ordinance and suggested that this could be clarified in a Governmental Affairs Meeting.

The Chairman called for a continued discussion from the Government Affairs Committee regarding the consulting for federal and state government relations. Government Affairs Committee Chairman Gloria Gaines and Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed. Commissioner Gaines reiterated that committees provide recommendations to the Board and reminded the Commission that the Governmental Affairs committee did not provide

a recommendation in the last meeting but provided different ideas. The current contract with the vendor had expired and services are now provided on a month-to-month basis. She also reminded the Board that there was no previous solicitation of the current vendor. Mr. Brooks shared that as Acting County Administrator, he would like to have the appropriate contractual arrangements be made. He provided an update on the meeting with Georgia Links and shared that only provided state lobbying where Cornerstone had “eyes and ears” on the federal and state level. Mr. Perry mentioned to Mr. Brooks that they could continue to provide federal support. Commissioner Gaines said that whoever we select, the Board needs to have full awareness of their work. The Chairman provided his concerns after reviewing the contract. Chairman Heard also discussed the concern of some of the media publishing dishonest reports. Commissioner Edwards would like to see the work that the proposed vendors have conducted. Commissioner Gray provided comments on the pros of using a lobbyist who provides both federal and state services. He added the need for improved communication that should be enhanced by the Board and vendors. Commissioner Gray asked for specifics on how Cornerstone failed and stated that this understanding is needed prior to seeking other vendors. His concern was that engaging different lobbyists would cause the taxpayers to “pay out a premium”. In addition, we would lose our current synergy. Commissioner Gaines mentioned the options the Board had to include renewing, issuing a RFP, and allowing vendors to bid on the contract, or obtain letters of interest.

Mr. Brooks said that one new ambulance was received and the other two were on the way. Commissioner Edwards provided kudos to staff regarding the proclamations and excellence with framing. Commissioner Gray asked about the notice for the retreat and Clerk Ware addressed. Commissioner Gaines asked about the status of the website and Mr. Brooks said that the Levee was our firm and an update would be provided in a Work Session. He also readdressed the status of the audit and the plan for quarterly financial plan updates. Commissioner Jones offered condolences to the family of Commissioner Edwards and the family of Historic Preservation Commission Chair Angie Jones.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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COUNTY CLERK