

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 09, 2024 DRAFT

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on September 09, 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, Deputy County Clerk Bristeria Clark Hope, 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 by the Chairman, he called for approval of the minutes for the August 5th Regular Meeting and August 12th Work Session.

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

The Chairman recognized Citizen Audrey Harris Hawthorne to accept the proclamation recognizing her 101st Birthday. Ms. Hawthorne shared a brief overview of her life and Commissioners Gaines and Jones provided sentiments. The proclamation reads as follows:

Dougherty County Board of Commissioners Celebrates Audrey Harris Hawthorne's 101st Birthday and Centenarian Legacy

Whereas, Audrey Harris Hawthorne was born on August 26, 1923, in Cairo, Georgia, to Andrew Harris and Eula Williams, and received her early education in Cairo before relocating to Pelham, Georgia, with her family; and

Whereas, following the passing of her mother at the tender age of 15, Audrey and her brother moved to Goulds, Florida, to live with their uncle, where she sought to further her education and opportunities despite the challenges she faced; and

Whereas, demonstrating remarkable resilience and determination, Audrey moved to Miami, Florida, where she worked in domestic roles while attending a technical school to become a nurse's aide, ultimately earning her certificate and working at Haleigh Baptist Hospital; and

Whereas, Audrey Harris Hawthorne's professional journey included a period of domestic work, which she chose to focus on after her marriage to Clarence Shannon, with whom she shared 16 years before their divorce; and

Whereas, Audrey later met and married Thurman Hawthorne, who preceded her in death in 2004 and continued her career in domestic work until her retirement; and

Whereas, after living alone for several years, Audrey's hearing and vision challenges prompted her move to Albany, Georgia, where she now resides with her sister, Willie Mae Dillard; and

Whereas, she was a member of the St Luke Baptist Church in Miami for many years and served on the usher board until she moved to Albany Georgia where she is now a member at St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church led Rev. Calvin Rollins; and

Whereas, throughout her life, Audrey Harris Hawthorne has exemplified perseverance, adaptability, and dedication, making significant contributions to her community and serving as an inspiration to those around her.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners extends its deepest admiration and respect to Audrey Harris Hawthorne for her unwavering spirit, accomplishments, and contributions. We honor her legacy and celebrate her life as a testament to the strength and resilience of our community.

This the 9th day of September, 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: _____
LORENZO L. HEARD, Chairman
Dougherty County Commission

The Chairman recognized Citizen Jason Browning to discuss safety concerns in District 6. Mr. Browning shared his concern about individuals deer hunting in the neighborhood using a high-power rifle. He wanted to know if archery could be used. Commissioner Gray suggested creating a bow hunting policy in the unincorporated areas. This recommendation could balance the desire for people to hunt and ensure that neighbors were safe. Attorney Shalishali said that he would look at this matter and get with Code Enforcement regarding an ordinance.

The Chairman recognized Scott Steiner, President & CEO, of Phoebe Putney Health System to provide an update to the Board. Mr. Steiner provided an overview that shared \$58 million was spent in charity care and \$474 million total in community benefit obligations. He mentioned community investments from the community gardens and free prescriptions. He shared that 152 nurses were enrolled for Fall 2024 at Albany Technical College. The new NICU center will be opening in January 2025. Phoebe North Campus was a partnership with Affaibilit to lease space for a 23 LTAC unit. Commissioner Gaines wanted to see if a master plan was available. Mr. Steiner said that they were currently working on a master facility plan.

The Chairman recognized Mental Health Development Disabilities & Addictive Disease Advisory Council - Regional 4 Board Members Gail Davenport and Debbie Richardson to provide an update on the DBHDD Priorities and Strategies and share information on the upcoming NAMI Walk. Ms. Davenport shared the three items from the 2024-2025 priority list for Region 4 Regional Advisory Council. Ms. Richardson said that September was National Suicide Month and Family

to Family classes will be starting on September 12th.

The Chairman recognized Dougherty County Police Chief Kenneth Johnson to update the Commission on activity in the unincorporated area. Chief Johnson shared that the number one crime was aggravated assault (firearm) and number two was armed robberies. There was no report of gang violence, but increased officer visibility helped to deter the crimes mentioned. The goal was to patrol in high crime spots. He shared that joint monthly command meetings were held with the Albany Police Department where crime is discussed in the community.

The Chairman recognized Founder, CEO at HT1/Georgia Music Association, Henry Thomas to share his ideas and information concerning assistance with healing the nation.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the approval of a stipend for the Coroner to supplement his annual salary effective with the September monthly payroll distribution.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Gray wanted to revisit our financial policy and cautioned the Board regarding making nonemergency decisions outside of the budget. He suggested that this request should be considered during the budget time to reflect our policy and procedures, Chairman Heard shared that this budget item request was made a year ago. Mr. Brooks said that this was also discussed during the Finance Committee Meeting. He added that the staff's goal is to adhere to the budget but there are times that we have to adjust to accompany the will of the Board. Commissioner Gaines suggested that we add a line to provide the funding source. Commissioner Gaines motioned for approval to include the funding source in the agenda item. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the substitute motion passed with five ayes by Commissioners Edwards, Johnson, Gaines, Jones and Chairman Heard and two nays by Commissioners Newsome and Gray. Resolution 24-034 is entitled:

RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE
APPROVAL OF STIPEND FOR CORONER TO
SUPPLEMENT HIS MINIMUM ANNUAL SALARY;
REPEALING RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF
RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution establishing a Judicial Building Master Planning Task Force, providing for the purpose, establishing membership, organization, support, goals, and funding. Funding for the efforts of the amount of up to \$400,000 will be utilized by SPLOST.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. Under discussion, Mr. Brooks shared that this concept was presented to the Board nine months ago and part of this request was to include the Task Force. He also clarified that it was staff generated with the Task Force. Commissioner Gaines suggested adding additional individuals such as the

Chairman and the Municipal Court Judge. Commissioner Gaines made a motion to amend the agenda item to include additional individuals. The motion failed with a lack of second. There being no further discussion, the original motion for approval passed with six ayes by Commissioners Newsome, Edwards, Johnson, Gray, Jones and Chairman Heard and one nay by Commissioner Gaines. Resolution 24-035 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A JUDICIAL BUILDING
MASTER PLANNING TASK FORCE AND PROVIDING FOR
ITS PURPOSE, MEMBERSHIP; ORGANIZATION, FUNDING
AND OBJECTIVES; REPEALING PRIOR RESOLUTIONS IN
CONFLICT HEREWITH;
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for consideration to accept the needs assessment and proposal to develop a Master Plan for the Dougherty County Judicial Building from SRJ Architects, Inc. (Albany, GA). Funding for the efforts of the amount of up to \$400,000 will be utilized by SPLOST. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks and Facilities Management Director Heidi Hailey addressed.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the 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. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks addressed.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Johnson, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 24-036 is entitled:

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from Disaster Recovery and Grants to accept the funding and retroactive application for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Grant #B-24-CP-GA-0674 for the Putney Park Project in the amount of \$685,000. This is a 100% funded grant with no local match. Acting County Administrator Barry Brooks, Program Manager and Disaster Recovery and Grants Harriet Hollis addressed.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Newsome, the motion

for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for the consideration of the recommendation from the County Attorney to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Edwards, the motion for approval passed unanimously via roll call. The Board entered into Executive Session at 12:58 p.m. and reconvened in the Chambers at 1:22 p.m.

The Chairman called for consideration of the approval of the offer letter for the appointment of the County Administrator.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Edwards, the motion for approval passed with four ayes by Commissioners Edwards, Johnson, Gaines, and Chairman Heard, two nays by Commissioners Newsome and Gray and one abstain from Commissioner Jones.

Attorney Shalishali shared that the County received last Friday, \$23,032.50 as a part of the McKenzie Subdivision settlement.

Upon a question by Commissioner Edwards, it was shared that the new County Administrator's start date will be September 16, 2024. Commissioner Johnson shared an AI PowerPoint and wanted the Board to think about where Dougherty County should be headed in the future. He also mentioned passing different zoning ordinances and provided updates from the ACCG meeting he attended. Commissioner Gaines clarified that she was not affiliated with any lobbyist and wanted to clear up the rumor that was written by a local journalist. Commissioner Jones provided an update from a NACO call and asked Mr. Brooks to ensure that our IT department had this information. He also asked for a moment of silence for the loved ones involved in the shooting that took place in Winder, Ga.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK