

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

February 26, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on February 26, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. after the selection by Albany State University (ASU). Present were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, and Anthony Jones. Also present were Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks, County Attorney Alex Shalishali, 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. Commissioner Ed Newsome was absent.

After the invocation by Chairman Heard, he asked the Commission to review the minutes of the February 5th Regular Meeting, February 12th Work Session and February 12th Special Called Meeting.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners, presented a proclamation celebrating Black History Month and the historical legacy of Dougherty County's Legislative African American leadership. Physically present were former representatives Winfred Dukes and Lawrence Roberts. The proclamation reads as follows:

**A PROCLAMATION
BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA
COMMEMORATING THE LEGACY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN GEORGIA STATE
REPRESENTATIVES FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

WHEREAS, the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners recognizes that Black History Month is an opportunity to honor the contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout history and

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly has been enriched by the service and dedication of numerous African American representatives who have worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights and interests of their constituents and

WHEREAS, former State Representatives John White, Winfred Dukes, Lawrence Roberts, Freddie Powell-Sims, CaMia Hopson-Jackson and Mary Young-Cummings have all made significant contributions to the State of Georgia through their service in the General Assembly, leaving a legacy of leadership, integrity, and commitment to the betterment of our communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County, Georgia proclaims that their leadership, courage, and commitment to public service have not only inspired generations but have also paved the way for progress and equality in our beloved community.

This the 26th day of February, 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
DOUGHERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

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

The Chairman recognized citizen Bruce Capps to discuss a few concerns. He shared that there should be more discussion on the tennis center and the Intergovernmental Agreement. He perceived that there was different information provided by the City of Albany and Dougherty County. He suggested that there needs to be more oversight for the Albany Dougherty Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). He suggested that there should be a comprehensive plan for the Historic District. His ask is for the Commission to have a presentation from the HPC to share what has been done in the past and provide plans for the future. He gave an update on a previous request by Commissioner Gaines on a poverty reduction plan. He identified homeownership as a starting point. The discussion and review were deferred to the Attorney. Upon the request of Commissioner Johnson, a presentation of the HPC will be placed on the agenda. Commissioner Jones requested markers be placed in the County noting the historic areas.

The Chairman recognized Henry Thomas, Founder, Georgia Music Association, to request an update from the Board on his Call To Unity Campaign. He presented additional information to the Board and asked for a follow-up. The Chairman shared that after dissemination and review of the packet, Mr. Thomas could come back in 30 days.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to upgrade the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) for the Sheriff's Office from NEC Corporation of America (Irving, TX) in the amount of \$44,600 as required by the Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI). The upgrade is required to allow the Sheriff's Office to continue connection to the State and FBI systems. Funding is available in the General Fund. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Major Ken Faust addressed. Commissioner Johnson clarified that this is an unfunded mandate. Major Faust shared that this is separate from the CJIS upgrade. Captain Frederick Wells explained that the County was given notice in September 2023 but was notified that the project would be delayed until January 2024 because the state was reviewing proposals. The current AFIS system was installed in 2010. Implementation will be phased in starting with the state level first. There were concerns by the Board regarding funding and Mr. Brooks shared that the financial audit will help provide the transparency that the Board requested. The concern, by many, is the healthiness of the contingency fund.

The Chairman called for a recommendation from Dougherty County Police to purchase twenty-two flock cameras in the amount of \$209,949.92 from sole-source provider Flock Group, Inc. (Atlanta, GA). The expenditure includes the flock cameras, set-up, testing, and license plate

readers with data retrieval capabilities. Funding is provided by the Public Safety and Community Violence Reduction Grant. Assistant County Administrator Barry Brooks and Assistant Chief Tateshea Irving addressed. Assistant Chief Irving clarified that this was a reimbursement grant that the County received and the types of cameras. She also addressed questions regarding location and the grant provision for three years. Upon the request of Commissioner Gray, she will research the ability for private facilities (i.e. apartment complexes) to install the devices. Information was shared on how data and resources were used to identify potential locations. Commissioner Edwards still desires physical traditional efforts, and she clarified that this is a resource [for officers] not a replacement [of them]. She did share that the Dougherty County Police does work with the City of Albany. Commissioner Gaines would like an update on the effectiveness of the project at the appropriate time.

The Chairman called for a recommendation to approve the proposed increases to the Environmental Health Fees Schedule. The last increase approved by the Commission was made in the December 7, 2015 Regular Meeting. District Environmental Health Director, Clay Poole, addressed. Environmental Health County Manager, James Davis was present. Commissioner Gaines asked that the increase be quantified, and she ideally wanted to determine if costs were being recouped. Commissioner Johnson was concerned regarding the cost of mobile food units. Commissioner Gray shared how the state changed legislation and that the fee would be cost savings because multiple county licenses were no longer required. Mr. Poole clarified that the fee will be consistent in all of his 14 counties. He shared that our fees were significantly lower compared to the other districts. There was a very extensive conversation and per the request of Commissioner Jones, a comparison of other districts will be provided. Commissioner Gray said that the comparison will show how cost-effective it is to do business in Dougherty County.

The Chairman called for the discussion of the nomination for the County's Voting Delegate at the Region 4 Meeting on March 26, 2024 in Moultrie, GA as requested by ACCG as part of Georgia's participation in the national Opioid Distributor and Janssen Settlements. The Memorandum of Understanding requires the creation of the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission (GOSAC) and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). Dougherty County is considered a Participating Local Government and is required to vote on GOSAC representatives and RAC members. County Attorney Alex Shalishali addressed. Attorney Shalishali shared that \$638 million will be provided to the state of Georgia over a period of 18 years. The State's share will be 75% or an equivalent of \$479 million. The money that Dougherty County received has come from the 25%. He highlighted the participating local government categories. Dougherty County is part of Region 4 and our role is to vote on the three remaining GOSAC members to represent local governments and the RAC members for the regions. The delegate must be physically present to vote and the delegation can be a staff member or member of the Board. The use of the funds was highlighted. Upon a suggestion of Commissioner Johnson, the consideration is for Commissioner Gray to serve as the delegate. Commissioner Gray shared that he will if it is the desire of the Board.

Mr. Brooks shared that there were significant and positive seizures made by the Special Investigative Unit. He provided an update on the replacement of AEDs in the Government Complex buildings. Training and monitoring of devices will be done by EMS. He discussed the possibility to conduct strategic planning efforts by having the Southwest Georgia Regional

Commission develop a 5-year plan by that will include views of the Commission, staff, and citizens. There will be a future presentation of the cost of the requested move of the website to Granicus. Ideally, some funding can be expended this fiscal year for the project.

Commissioner Edwards asked if there could be a local policy to lower the US flag to honor an employee's death and Attorney Shalishali shared that he would review. Commissioner Johnson gave kudos to the Chairman for recognizing African American Leadership and would like Albany/Dougherty's name behind the dais because the meetings are being broadcast. He asked about the cost of batteries for an AED and Mr. Brooks said that there is a minimal cost and funds are ideally provided by grants. Commissioner Johnson asked about the feasibility of a Fire Station on Philema Road and invited all to attend the following Finance Committee Meeting. Commissioner Gray asked that the community please be mindful of our appearance, especially this week, because we are hosting significant events. His desire is for the community to be prideful. Commissioner Gaines gave kudos to the Chairman for the recognition of services and commended Ms. Banks and staff. Commissioner Jones said that he will work with Mr. Brooks on a partnership with Worth County. He asked about the status of the code project and Commissioner Gaines responded and echoed the same kudos to the Chairman and staff. Chairman Heard encouraged all to display southern hospitality and thanked Ms. Banks for her assistance.

There being no further business to discuss the Commission the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK