

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2024

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on March 4, 2024. Chairman Lorenzo Heard presided and called the meeting to order at 10:02 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 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 of the February 5th Regular Meeting, February 12th Work Session and February 12th Special Called Meeting.

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

The Chairman, alongside the other members of the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners, provided a special recognition to Sam Allen, Director, Dougherty County EMS, as 2024 Paramedic Manager of the Year; Michael Hefton, Deputy, Dougherty County Sheriff's Office 2023 Officer of the Year and Melvin Stultz, Officer, Dougherty County Police Department, 2023 Officer of the Year. These individuals were recognized during the annual Exchange Club of Albany program. Sheriff Sproul introduced Officer Hefton and mentioned the services he provided with his K9 Maverick. Chief Johnson introduced Officer Stultz. Supervisor Mike Pence introduced EMS Director Sam Allen. Sentiments and accolades were provided by the Board.

The Chairman recognized Chief Kenneth Johnson to update the Commission with the annual report for the Dougherty County Police. During the presentation, he highlighted key statistics. In 2023, DCP was dispatched to 18,023 calls which was a daily average of 49.3 calls. He announced Detective Melvin Stultz as the 2023 Officer of the Year, Senior Clerk/Dispatcher Pamela Bowens as the 2023 Support Staff of the Year, Top Gunner of Year Patrolman Elder Johnson and Traffic Officer of the Year Addonis Batlle. Questions pertaining to the statistic increase were answered. Commissioner Gray suggested a partnership with our local mental health entities. The needs of the departments were also discussed. Commissioner Edwards asked about a potential contract with vendors that manage wild animals. He also shared his concern with Chief Johnson requesting that there is more patrolling and less parking at venues. Lastly, he asked the Chief to also conduct exit

interviews in addition to HR. Commissioner Gaines asked for a visual map of where crimes are geographically occurring in the County.

The Chairman recognized Director Sam Allen to update the Commission with the annual report for the Dougherty County Emergency Medical Services Department. In 2023, EMS responded to 24,241 calls, billed 12,480 transports, collected \$3,911,256 from transports and \$38,361 was collected for standby events. The average 911 emergency response time is 5 minutes and 43 seconds with the peak call volume at 11:30 a.m. This was the first year of the highest employee retainage after the salary adjustments. A very lengthy discussion ensued.

The Chairman called for consideration 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). Funding is available in General Fund Contingency.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the 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.

Commissioner Newsome moved for approval. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Gaines asked again for the maintenance cost and Mr. Brooks clarified that the cost is about \$3,000. The first 3 years were grant-funded, and grants can be sought for future years, if the Board desires to continue with the program. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the recommended increases in the Dougherty County Environmental Health Fees.

Commissioner Gray moved for approval. Commissioner Newsome seconded the motion. Under discussion, Commissioner Edwards asked Commissioner Gray if we were adopting a policy. Commissioner Gray shared that the fee schedule increase was a part of the policy. He added that we were adopting the fee schedule increase that was being presented statewide. It was later clarified that Commissioner Edwards was asking about the EMS standby policy. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 24-008 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED

A RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED
INCREASE IN DOUGHERTY COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT FEES;
REPEALING RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF
RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH;
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

The Chairman called for consideration the recommendation for Commissioner Russell Gray to serve as the County 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.

Upon a nomination by Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Gray was unanimously appointed to represent Dougherty County as the Voting Delegate at the Region 4 Meeting.

Mr. Brooks gave kudos to all the individuals involved in a successful Combos Marathon. Attorney Shalishali gave an update on the relationship of Dougherty County and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), Ordinance Section 2-12-8 to 11. He shared that our code ordinance specifies action, and he highlighted the Board's role in governance and membership. He shared that the HPC does have the latitude to adopt its own bylaws. The concerns from last week were not specifically addressed but the code gives latitude to both Dougherty County and the City of Albany. He also will still need to review the MOU and answer any additional questions.

Commissioner Newsome asked for an update on the renovations for the new Judge. Mr. Brooks shared that an agenda item will be brought to the Board after the meeting with himself, Judge Lockette, and the architect this week. Commissioner Edwards asked that the Board proceed with hiring a grant writer. Upon request, Attorney Shalishali shared Dougherty does not have a flag policy, but there is a state and federal policy that gives guidance. The federal policy does give latitude to the Governors of each state. Commissioner Gray shared that federally, there are limitations, but we can proceed as we desire with the County flag. Mr. Brooks thanked Commissioner Edwards for his interest in our employees and he will work with the Chairman and Attorney [on recognition ideas]. Mr. Brooks suggested that the topic be included in the ordinance review. Commissioner Johnson asked for a county flag and gave kudos to all the local sport teams and for a successful event. Commissioner Gray gave kudos to those who participated in the weekend's event and kept the area clean. Commissioner Gaines shared concerns about the local drownings and would like to seek more preventative methods. She also asked that water safety be promoted on social media. Mr. Brooks shared that our Safety Committee and Coroner were both working on those measures. Commissioner Jones would like Rashelle Minx and Steven Belk to provide an update on the most recent events. Chairman Heard asked that the meeting participant pause in memory of the life of the former City of Albany employee Darrious Stephens.

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

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gaines, the motion for approval passed unanimously via roll call.

There being no further discussion, the Board entered into Executive Session at 12:18 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK