

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 6, 2021

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on December 6, 2021. Chairman Christopher Cohilas presided and called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Commissioners present were Victor Edwards, Gloria Gaines, Russell Gray, Clinton Johnson, Anthony Jones and Ed Newsome. Also present were County Administrator Michael McCoy, Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison, County Attorney Spencer Lee, 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, the Chairman called for approval of the November 1st Regular Meeting and November 8th Work Session Minutes.

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

The Chairman recognized 4-H Youth Development /County Extension Agent Latrina West and Dougherty County 4-H representatives to thank the Commission for its support. Extension Service Coordinator James Morgan provided the quarterly report after the presentation. Some of the youth from various high schools were present to share how 4H has impacted their lives. Tokens of appreciation and a holiday song were provided and Mr. Morgan shared an update on activity from July 2021-October 2021.

The Chairman recognized Walter Kelley, Library Board of Trustees Chairman and Gail Evans, Library Director, to provide their Annual Report. Mr. Kelly shared that our library system is healthy and meets the needs of our community. He provided his thanks for the support of their Board. He acknowledged the work of former director Pauline Abidde and current director Gail Evans. Mrs. Evans provided the annual update and shared that the library collected \$19,451, in the copies/ prints, \$18,117 in fines and \$5,328 from four events in May 2021. She also added that the construction is underway for Westtown. However, there have been delays in renovations due to Covid. In response to Commissioner Gaines' concern, Mrs. Evans shared how services to the community during the temporary closure of the library will be provided.

The Chairman recognized Tom Crowley with Coldwell Banker/Walden & Kirkland to update the Commission as to the management of the property located at 201 Holly Drive.

Mr. Crowley shared that Brick Pointe Apartments was recently acquired by a new owner who has very ambitious plans for the property. The new owner has also committed money for landscaping, lighting and other renovations. He provided updates in reference to a citation received and other initiatives were shared specifically regarding trash concerns. Commissioner Edwards provided validation for the improvements. Commissioners shared that any suggestions or improvements pertaining to ordinances, etc. are welcome to be provided. Mr. Crowley was commended and was asked to express the Commissioners appreciation to the owners for their work to improve the area.

The Chairman recognized the residents from Southgate Community to discuss their concerns about receiving speed bumps in their community. Citizen Mr. Dawson questioned the validity of the report and the representatives stressed that they are looking for some type of calming device to help them.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the acceptance of the contract for Landscape and Lawn Care for the Public Works Department from the lowest most responsible and responsive bidder, The Jones Agency Group (Albany, GA) in the amount of \$36,000, subject to the execution of the contract by the County Administrator. Eight vendors submitted bids with the highest being \$96,960. Funding is budgeted in the General Fund. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison addressed. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis and City of Albany Buyer Kimberly Allen were present.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. Upon the question of Commissioner Edwards, Mr. Addison and Public Works Director Chuck Mathis confirmed that a meeting was held with the vendor. The vendor confirmed that they could perform the requirements of the bid at the cost provided. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-072 is entitled:

**A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE APPROVAL AND
EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR LANDSCAPE AND LAWN
CARE FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WITH THE
JONES AGENCY GROUP, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$36,000.00;
REPEALING RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS
OF RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.**

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation to accept the quote to replace the Cooling Tower at the Judicial Building for Facilities Management from the lowest responsible and responsive vendor, RHC Heating and Cooling in the amount of \$144,552.54. Four vendors submitted quotes with the highest being \$228,589.65. Funding

is budgeted in SPLOST VII Judicial Building Improvements. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison addressed. Facilities Management Director Heidi Minnick was present. Mr. Addison said that the current cooling tower has met the end of the life cycle and is recommending it be replaced.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution requesting that the Commission ask the State Legislature to provide local enabling legislation to support funding of the Southwest Georgia Legal Self-Help Center. Gerald Williams, Director, Southwest Georgia Legal Self-Help Center was present to address concerns.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Johnson, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-073 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
AGREEMENT BETWEEN DOUGHERTY COUNTY AND THE
SOUTHWEST GEORGIA SELF-HELP CENTER AND THE
DOUGHERTY COUNTY LAW LIBRARY ASKING THE
DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION TO PLACE ON ITS
LOCAL AGENDA A REQUEST OF THE STATE
LEGISLATURE FOR LOCAL ENABLING LEGISLATION TO
HELP FUND THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA SELF- HELP
CENTER AND THE DOUGHERTY COUNTY LAW LIBRARY.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution providing for the acceptance and execution of the Lease Instrument and Operations Agreement with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR).

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Edwards, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-074 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A BOAT RAMP OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE
AGREEMENT.

The Chairman called for consideration to approve the alcohol application from Moree's Grocery & Liquor, Inc, Bettye J. Amburn licensee, dba Moree's Grocery, at 4028 Moultrie Road for Package- Beer. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal's Office recommended approval.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration to approve the alcohol application from Sylvester Food, Inc., Faryal Saif Cheerna, licensee, dba Sylvester Food, at 3333 Sylvester Hwy, for Package- Beer and Wine. The Albany-Dougherty Marshal's Office recommended approval.

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

The Chairman called for consideration to accept the proposed Dougherty County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 22 in the amount of \$8,400,000.

Commissioner Jones moved for approval. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. Under discussion, Ms. Cutts confirmed for Commissioner Johnson that the cost of technology increased. There being no further discussion, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the reappointment of the Dougherty County Police Chief through the extension of the employment agreement effective January 3, 2022 through January 2, 2023. Commissioner Johnson made a substitute motion to table the request until the evaluation could be reviewed. The County Administrator stated that there is a contract in place for the Police Chief but the position serves as an employee of the County Administrator. He added that the Police Chief's evaluation is satisfactory and stated that the only direct reports of the Board are the County Attorney and County Administrator. Commissioner Johnson stated that the review of the evaluation is not saying anything is wrong but allows the Board to have a more informed decision in the process.

Commissioner Johnson's substitute motion to table the decision of the extension of the employment agreement for the Police Chief until the County Commission reviewed the written evaluation was seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Under discussion, Mr. McCoy said that he will forward the evaluation to the Board and the action can be scheduled for the first meeting in January 2022. Chairman Cohilas shared that this [request] can become a practice in the future and allow the Commission to have a comment period. Commissioner Gaines shared her concerns regarding the request and does not agree with delaying action. Commissioner Gray and Chairman Cohilas agreed that delaying the agreement is not needed because a wrong message to the Chief Police may be perceived. It was noted that the Chief has done a great job throughout the year and it was stated that the evaluation can be received over the Christmas break. Commissioners Johnson and Edwards were in favor of the substitute motion and Commissioners Newsome, Gray, Gaines, Jones and Chairman Cohilas voted nay. The original motion to extend the employment agreement for the Police Chief was approved and passed unanimously. Commissioner Gaines asked Mr. McCoy have the Police Chief have a discussion with the Board regarding some concerns in the community.

The Chairman called for consideration of the reappointment of the County Administrator through the extension of the employment agreement effective January 3, 2022 through January 2, 2023 per section 1-3-23 of the Dougherty County Code of Ordinances.

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

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the Emergency Management Agency to provide a letter of support to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to review and amend the permit for Georgia Power on Lake Worth in Dougherty County.

Commissioner Gaines moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the motion for approval passed unanimously.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the Emergency Management Agency to install a stage gauge on Lake Chehaw in the amount of \$25,000. Funding will be provided in SPLOST.

The item failed due to the lack of a motion and Chairman Cohilas shared that he considered the matter closed.

The Chairman called for consideration of the proposed board appointments. County Clerk Jawahn Ware was present to address. Upon nomination by Commissioner Gray, the recommendation for Dr. Tamara Davis to replace Wilbert Moore was unanimously accepted to the Dougherty County Health Board for a six-year term ending December 31, 2027.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution declaring a 2017 Ford Police Interceptor (from the Sheriff's Office) as surplus and authorizing the sale through Underwriters Safety & Claims. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison addressed and shared that this was a standard procedure.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Jones the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-075 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED

A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE AS SURPLUS A
SALVAGED 2017 FORD POLICE INTERCEPTOR
(VIN. 1FM5K8RXHGB08040) AND HAVE SAID
SURPLUSSED SALVAGED VEHICLE DISPOSED
OF THROUGH UNDERWRITERS SAFETY AND

CLAIMS, DOUGHERTY COUNTY'S THIRD
PARTY HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from ACCG to accept the resolution supporting changes to Georgia's annexation law. The focus of the change is particularly on the arbitration/dispute resolution process. County Administrator Michael McCoy and County Attorney Spencer Lee addressed.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Jones, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-076 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING REFORM TO GEORGIA'S ANNEXATION
DISPUTE RESOLUTION LAW.

The Chairman called for consideration of the resolution designating Chairman Christopher Cohilas and County Administrator Michael McCoy as Certifying Officers. The County must designate certifying officers to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Federal laws and authorities as required for Dougherty County to submit the Homeowner Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Program (HRRP) applications. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Mr. McCoy said that this was administrative housekeeping for grants and notification was provided by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Commissioner Jones shared that an organization will make a presentation in the future regarding possible funding opportunities.

Commissioner Johnson moved for approval. Upon a second by Commissioner Gray, the motion for approval passed unanimously. Resolution 21-077 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION
ENTITLED
A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DOUGHERTY
COUNTY, CHRISTOPHER S. COHILAS, AND COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR, MICHAEL MCCOY, AS THE CERTIFYING
OFFICERS FOR THE TIER II ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS
NECESSARY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) AND ALL FEDERAL LAWS
AND AUTHORITIES AS REQUIRED FOR DOUGHERTY COUNTY TO
SUBMIT THEIR HOMEOWNER REHABILITATION &
RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM (HRRP) APPLICATION; REPEALING

RESOLUTIONS OR PARTS OF RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT
HEREWITH;
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Chairman called for consideration to install concrete speed tables on Astoria Drive (in the Southgate Community). The Traffic Calming Policy does not support the request.

The Chairman read the agenda but stated that deviation of the policy is unique [to the situation]; he alluded to safety concerns and community needs. Chairman Cohilas said that the most appropriate motion is to install rubber speed bumps. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Commissioner Edwards thanked staff, the Board and citizens for finding a solution for the public outcry. Chairman Cohilas continued to state that in this instance, the policy does not meet the unique circumstances of the situation. Commissioner Gray voiced his concern but stated that he will support the lower-cost options and hopes that it will provide a resolution desired. Commissioner Gaines asked that the Association come back in six months regarding the effectiveness of the bumps if approved. Technical clarity between speed tables and bumps was provided. There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

The Chairman called for consideration of the recommendation from the Recreation Committee to move forward with the tennis development at the southern portion of Satterfield Park and the National Guard Armory. Recreation Committee Chairman Clinton Johnson addressed. County Administrator Michael McCoy was available to address additional concerns. Chairman Johnson recommended that the County change the location of the center to the property that the County owns. Attorney Lee shared that this was the original location many years ago and would not prevent other development in the future. Attorney Lee added that he would like the recommendation to be amended stating that the development will comply with the master plan. Commissioner Johnson clarified that the recommendation is to move forward with the engineering development and not construction.

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

During updates from the Board, Commissioner Johnson said that he asked Mr. McCoy to work on the holding pond concern in East Albany (near Maple and Clark) and he would like for the County to work with a company to dredge the pond properly. Public Works Director Chuck Mathis provided an update and added that Dougherty County Public Works was not able to completely clean the area due to our equipment limitation. Chairman Cohilas asked that Mr. Mathis bring back other options to resolve the concern. Commissioner Gray provided an update on the redistricting meeting scheduled.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK