

DOUGHERTY COUNTY COMMISSION

DRAFT

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

November 9, 2020

The Dougherty County Commission met in Room 100 of the Albany-Dougherty Government Center on November 9, 2020. Chairman Christopher Cohilas presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Present [in the Chamber] were Commissioners Victor Edwards, Russell Gray, Lamar Hudgins and Clinton Johnson. Commissioners Gloria Gaines and Anthony Jones participated via the audio-conferencing feature. Also participating in the Chamber 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, via live streaming of the meeting on the County's Facebook page and the government public access channel.

The Chairman asked the Commission to review the minutes of the October 19th Regular Meeting and October 26th Work Session.

The Chairman recognized EMA Director/Fire Chief Cedric Scott to provide an emergency management agency update. He shared that EMA services have not been done according to House Bill 489, the City of Albany Ordinance 92-11 and the Dougherty County Resolution 92-012. The City of Albany has created an emergency management task force to evaluate. However, the City of Albany does not have a desire to have a separate department and desires for Dougherty County to participate on the task force. His desire is to have 4 levels of roles and responsibilities that could be reviewed and clarified so that responses could be coordinated prior to another emergency. The Chairman gave an extensive historical overview pertaining to the agency and requests made to GEMA and the response received. Chairman Cohilas' desire is for the City of Albany and Dougherty County to be "married together" on the countywide services. Chairman Cohilas asked for the County Administrator's recommendation on how to prioritize in the community and how to best work with the City of Albany. Mr. McCoy shared that there are opportunities relative to the emergency management plan and that this is the beginning of a process that he has been working on with Chief Scott to improve the EMA operations; he will come back with a recommendation. Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification of the request and Chief Scott shared that portions of the documents conflicted. He stated that operations were not consistent with the emergency operation plan which needed to be updated and approved by both Commissions and forwarded to GEMA. Commissioner Jones requested an independent opinion to be provided and be presented at a Joint Commission Meeting. Chief Scott clarified his responsibilities if an emergency occurred prior to the request being fulfilled. Chairman Cohilas believed that the report from GEMA was the best source of the independent review and information from that agency could be shared. A lengthy discussion ensued with Chairman Cohilas stating that he is in favor of a Joint City and County Commission meeting

The Chairman recognized citizen Eugene James to discuss tree concerns. Mr. James requested that a magnolia tree be removed from Putney Avenue because it poses a hazard and blocks the view of oncoming traffic. He also wanted lightning to be added on Radium Springs Road, without them traveling at night is difficult. Lastly, he asked that the trim limbs be cut on Radium Springs

Road because many limbs were at the point of breaking. Pictures and a petition were presented. For safety, he stressed the need for lights and sidewalks. Public Works Director Larry Cook addressed and shared that the tree trunk (on Putney Ave) was a potential safety hazard and previous action taken received resistance from citizens in the neighborhood. He confirmed that the tree is on the County's right of way. Mr. McCoy stated that there was funding in TSPLOST for sidewalks and a proposal was being developed on the priority list to include the Radium Springs area.

The Chairman recognized Paul Forgey, Planning & Development Services Director, to discuss the need for an ordinance for long term care facilities and group homes in the unincorporated areas of Dougherty County. Mr. Forgey suggested that there is a zoning text amendment created with definitions of various types of community residences to provide a unified ordinance. The amendment would revise the permitted use table. The City of Albany has this information in their ordinance and it was omitted in the County's document. The recommendation will also allow for ADA provisions and other legal matters pertaining to the Fair Housing Act. The Zoning Ordinance requires that the County Commissioners request the Planning Commission to review and amend the ordinance for the County Commissioners consideration. Commissioner Gray requested that the Chairman allow Mr. McCoy to make a request for a review to include the provision of licensing and regulations.

The Chairman recognized citizen Warren Grant. Mr. Grant requested that the County seek consolidation with the City.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation to purchase two 2021 Ford Explorers XLT for the EMS Department from the lowest responsive and responsible vendor meeting specifications, Peach State Ford (Cedartown, GA), in the amount of \$33,510 each for a total expenditure of \$67,020. Three qualified bids were received with the highest being \$68,155.60. Funding is budgeted in the SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison addressed. EMS Director Sam Allen and City of Albany Buyer Tina Strassenberg were present. Commissioner Johnson wanted to award Sunbelt and Mr. Addison shared the recommendation was to the lowest vendor. Mr. McCoy shared that the Commission could award differently if desired.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation to purchase one 2021 Ford F-350 Truck Chassis for the Solid Waste Department from the lowest responsive and responsible vendor meeting specifications, Peach State Ford (Cedartown, GA), in the amount of \$38,886. Four bids were received with the highest being \$40,105. Funding is budgeted in the Solid Waste Capital Outlay. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison addressed. Solid Waste Director Campbell Smith and City of Albany Buyer Tina Strassenberg were present.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation to accept the bid for the installation of a concrete trail around the pond located at Robert Cross Park from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting specifications, Zane Grace Construction (Leesburg, Ga) in the amount of \$76,937.81. Five bids were received with the highest base bid being \$109,152. Funding is budgeted in the SPLOST VII. Assistant County Administrator Scott Addison addressed. Public Works Director Larry Cook and Buyer Kimberly Allen were present.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation to accept the annual 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. County Administrator Michael McCoy addressed. Mr. McCoy stated that this was an annual housekeeping request.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation from Superior Court to apply for The Swift, Certain, and Fair Sanctions Grant Pilot Project Grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance/Department of Community Supervision in the amount of \$33,600. There is no local match required. Substance Abuse Coordinator Patricia Griffin addressed. Action on this item is scheduled to follow in a Special Called Meeting. Chairman Cohilas shared that this was a federal grant that supported substance abuse.

The Chairman called for a discussion of the recommendation from the District Attorney's Office to apply for a prosecuting attorney grant from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council agency in the amount of \$214,601 for use with the VOCA Program. There is a local match of \$53,650 required. District Attorney Greg Edwards addressed. Action on this item is scheduled to follow in a Special Called Meeting. Mr. Edwards shared that this was an annual request and that all positions for victim advocates were filled. Upon request of Commissioner Johnson, Mr. Edwards spoke about the process of using forfeiture funds and the sustainability for third party organizations. The conversation transition to the discussion about the performance on the Drug Unit. Mr. Edwards shared that there were two prosecutors assigned to drug cases and agreed to send his needs to which Chairman Cohilas said the County will provide in the legislative update. He will work on the recommendation of the Chairman and will provide a recommendation to Mr. McCoy per the request of Commissioner Victor Edwards for a financial number of matching funds for crime stoppers. Mr. McCoy shared that the Chamber plans to have a meeting to discuss crimes and several other issues.

Commissioner Johnson retracted his request pertaining to an award to Sunbelt; he was looking at a different document. Commissioner Gaines asked about an update on Leary Road and Mr. McCoy shared that the information had been provided; he will resend.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned to a Special Called Meeting at 12:12 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK